

SOUTHERLY



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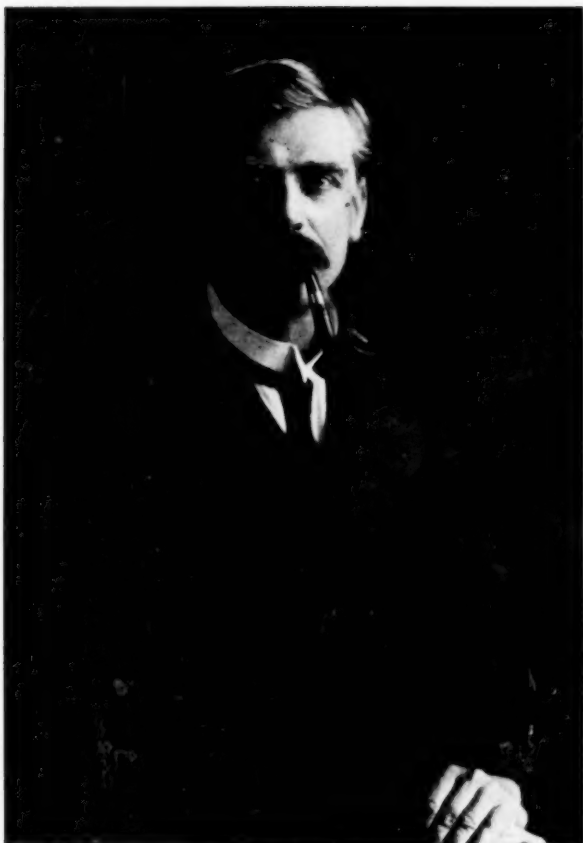
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RODERIC QUINN

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R. G. HOWARTH

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Roderic Quinn

By H. M. Green

The death of Roderic Quinn meant, apart from the loss of a lovable personality, the closing of one of our few remaining windows upon the poets and poetry of the nineties, especially the early nineties. Living windows I mean of course, but these bring us much closer than books, for the aims, the methods, the whole point of view and language of poetry and the likings and expectations of its readers have so changed in the last generation or two that it is hard without personal contact to get into sympathetic touch with the age and the poetry to which Quinn's work belonged; it is hard sometimes even to realize thoroughly that it did exist, and had an excuse for existing. And Quinn was in one way the best of our windows. For though Mary Gilmore, Hugh McCrae, Bernard O'Dowd are poets of far greater stature than has ever been claimed for Roderic Quinn, he was actually more representative of his day, more obviously bound up with it than any of them. At the mid-point of the nineties, about the turn of the century, almost everybody swore by "Patterdylaw and Son",* and there was not very much worth reading, in book-form that is, in the shape of poetry as distinct from the ballad. O'Dowd was known mainly in Victoria and at that time represented only by his earlier and drier gnomish morsels; "The Bush" was still about ten years ahead. So, more or less, were Mary Gilmore's first and by no means her best book *Marri'd*, and Hugh McCrae's first and very expensive *Satyrs and Sunlight*; and Brennan had published nothing but a couple of booklets for his friends. Even when the later work of these poets was available, and some of it was never available very readily, they occupied the literary background of those days, just as the balladists occupied the foreground; some were, outside a small group, unknown and the others were scarcely known. But between the two, in the middle distance, alongside Victor Daley, stood Roderic Quinn; both these poets had just appeared in book-form, and were well known anyhow through the *Bulletin*. They were discussed on the "Red Page" as leading Australian poets; most had read and everybody had at least heard of both of them; they filled a need for something more poetic than the balladists could provide, except in flashes here and there, and yet they did not impose too great a strain upon the comprehension in a day when clarity was considered a virtue in poetry. They belonged

* Paterson, Dyson, Lawson.

and appealed to a world that was comparatively simple and unsophisticated, though much less so than that of the balladists, and their pervading spirit was not adventure, as with the balladists, but beauty. They were undeniably poets, and to many they represented the Australian poetry of the period. They were always grouped together, and even now it is hard for a survivor from those days to regard them separately, though they had as a matter of fact little in common. Both were Irish-Australian, but Quinn was also native-born, his parents having migrated to Australia fourteen years earlier. Two of his brothers were also writers of verse. He had his schooling in Sydney, studied law for a while, taught in a State school up country, and finally became, like Daley, a freelance journalist; he must have been one of the very few Australians who have contrived to make some sort of a living out of verse. The best of it—or more probably—most of the best of it, for I remember several poems that appealed to me when I read them in the *Bulletin* but that were never collected—was published in his only book of verse, *Poems* (Sydney, 1920). There was also a novel, a poet's novel which was not very good, and a number of short stories which ought some day to be collected and published.

Quinn loved the Australian landscape, or rather certain aspects of it, as Daley did not. He stands nearer to the balladists than Daley in this and in that his verse is less fanciful and contains more human feeling than Daley's; but it possesses an intuitional content that separates it from the Australian ballad world. He is slower, quieter than Daley; he never achieves or for that matter attempts Daley's short bright lyric outbursts, but his intuitive quality enables him to pierce a little below the surface, as Daley seldom does. He feels more deeply than Daley, and attains at times the intensity of passion, but he has nothing like Daley's artistry or wealth of imagery or epigrammatic point. Indeed he was by no means an accomplished craftsman, and often spoils or half spoils a fine poem by clichés or sheer doggerel.

Almost the whole of Quinn's life was spent in Sydney, whose natural surroundings meant as much to him as the long coastal belt of New South Wales had meant to Kendall. He loved the "lotus flower" of Sydney's harbour; her

Green hills and long beaches
And roads red and white;

her coastal bush, her shadowy bays, her clouds and tides, "Grey smoke

in the green leaves". To many, indeed, he used to be known as the poet of happy picnics, of

Pink feet and white ankles
On beaches of gold.

It is true that the spirit of youthful out-of-doors Australian holiday, rounded off with a touch of lovemaking, has found no happier expression than in some of Quinn's verses: gentle, twilight lovemaking, suffused with a sentiment that runs over into sentimentality and is scarcely separable from the beauty or sometimes mere prettiness of its natural surroundings. But this sort of thing represents only a small part and that by no means the best of Quinn's work. He can perceive the hardness as well as the soft attraction of the natural world about him; he can tell how

While the hour of gold went by,
I saw through all its pageantry
The vast indifference of the sky,
The heartless beauty of the sea.

Like Kendall, he sees nature as a reflection of his own moods, but though the nature is sometimes the same, the moods and the man are very different, so that Quinn's poetry is not at all like Kendall's. Quinn lacked Kendall's education and reading and had a far smaller poetic gift, though it is individual enough. No intellectual, he is yet always conscious that there is something more important behind the picture; that there is

Within the world a second world
That circles ceaselessly;

that there are tides not only of the sea, but

That noise along the soul.

And in "The Fisher", after describing the bay at night, the great hill mirrored in the water, the leaping fish, the "silky, sucking tide" that moves as though on velvet, he gropes after some secret wonder that he feels must underlie all this, though here as elsewhere he can do no more than grope after it. The mystical element in Quinn attains its most fitting expression in "The Hidden Tide", from which the last two quotations are taken, and in "The Camp Within the West", in which the oppressed and weary move slowly along their road towards the sunset; but it is observable elsewhere, and it affects the atmosphere of his poetry as a whole.

Unlike Daley, Quinn never deals with a world of pure imagination, and even on its mystical side his work remains entirely human. Typically its temperature is warm, its movement slow, deliberate. But now and then, although the movement does not quicken, the substance seems to concentrate, the warmth increases, until the poem becomes passionate. This happens with some of the love poems, though others are merely sentimental; it is most marked in "The Currency Lass". That poem, in spite of a touch of melodrama and a number of clichés and banalities, is instinct with tragic intensity. With slow relentless beat, it tells how the lovers of the Currency Lass were marshalled

four and four,
A drum at their heads, in the days of old:
O, none could have guessed their hearts were sore;
They marched with such gayness in scarlet and gold;

how they had

loved her for years—their tangled souls
Like silvery fish in her beauty-mesh
All breathless reposed. . . . A dull drum rolls,
And Death is at hand for the Flower of Flesh.

The intensity gradually increases, through the words of the Lass herself, standing by her scaffold,

"A dancer I was from birth," she said;
"A baby, I danced on my mother's knee;
Now whistle a jig, with swaying head,
And, lovers of mine, I will dance for ye!"

to the relentless conclusion,

Good-bye to the world! The dance began
With death for the piper—he piped full well!

Quinn is essentially a picture-maker, and now and then, though rarely as compared with Daley, he can make a striking image. Some of these have been already mentioned, but there is also, for example, the reference in "The Hidden Tide" to

The sodden souls without a tide,
Dense as a rotten deep;

and, best of all perhaps,

The sea snored like some sleeping brute.

Quinn is fond of a four-beat line, which by reason of its extra syllables may be called a supercharged tetrameter. Instead of the hurried effect that is usually produced by the addition of extra syllables, so many of Quinn's are strongly stressed that the line is, on the contrary, slowed down; it marches heavily forward, with little variation of rhythm. But he uses also shorter and swifter rhythms, as in "Spring Song", from which a couple of lines have been quoted; and a rhythm that is fairly swift without being short, as in "Acushla", with its fresh incantatory opening,

I named her twice, I named her thrice,
I named her ten times over;
The wind heard, and the singing bird,
And the bee in the creamy clover.

And in "The Seeker", which has a far-off resemblance to part of Brennan's "Wanderer", there is an interesting rhythmic variation:

Good people, by your fires to-night
Sit close, and praise the red, red wood!
The wind is cold, the moon is white;
With me who wander 'tis not well; it is not well, but God is good.

Quinn's verse has a narrow range, but what with his patriotic ode, "The House of the Commonwealth", which however is by no means among Australia's best; a few ballads, and in particular the fine adventurous "Sea-seekers"; and the love poems, it may be seen that his work is not confined to a more or less mystical interpretation of natural features. His reputation must depend however upon a comparatively few poems, and these are very uneven. Nevertheless, he has an assured if not very high place in Australian poetry, and it is by no means certain that it is lower than Daley's. The wine that Daley pours is a light and sparkling wine, not a champagne, but a sparkling hock; Quinn's is a still red wine, with more body to it.

Elsie Mackay

BY WALTER JAMES

My father bred sheep in Australia and grew rich. I was born on one of his properties with the uncouth name of Mundabullangana in a formidable country not far inland from the northwest coast where the fleeces of a hundred thousand sheep were carried in great waggons over a treeless desert to the ocean and sent in small ships southward to Fremantle. It lies in my memory a crude inhospitable country stark and arid in seasons when rain failed to green the dusty soil with brief herbage. In that land fortune rests with God. The great flocks that pasture there cannot be kept alive by human effort alone and my father was nearly broken by a drought that tortured the soil for seven years. He had decided to abandon the property and go fishing for pearls when the rains came and brought with them the beginning of tardy fortune.

Sheep breeding has always been profitable and in those days too labour was cheap. The flocks were tended by natives who worked for a pittance and the white men who had the overseeing of them worked for little more. Their hours were long and their camping places rough. If the wool did not fetch the prices to which we are used today the margin of profit was still enormous and the men who were tough and adventurous enough to take up such land were given their reward. Always provided the rains came.

For their wives it was harder. Women are seldom so wrapped up in moneymaking as men and isolation with the lack of social contacts presses harshly on them. In one way though they were luckier than Australian women today for they did get some sort of help about the house and many of the natives and halfcastes could be trained as domestics. There was too a limited amount of Asiatic labour. Australian sentiment nowadays is against keeping servants and indeed why should men risk race pollution with coloured domestics when they have good white wives and daughters at call and unpaid? Yet how crude was the life on these remote stations! Through an illness that nearly blinded me I was fed by my black nurse on snake soup with white grubs floating in it and in an outbreak of smallpox I was vaccinated with a pocket knife. How often later in theatre dressing-rooms I thought unkindly of the doctor who did the job as I plastered a double thickness of makeup over my right arm.

My own life on the station was brief for I was still in short frocks

when my father's increasing fortunes enabled us to take a house in the capital and live there in some style. New pastoral properties were bought and in the manner of wealthy Australians father acquired racing stables and turned to breeding thoroughbreds. He and my mother quarrelled constantly. My elder sister had died and as usually happens in unhappy homes it was required of me to seek my own amusements and above all keep out of the way. I sensed there could be no place for me in that home and father did the best he could for an unwanted daughter when he took me from its influence. With a hurried blessing and a look of relief he deposited me in Mademoiselle Reuy's boarding-school at Lausanne. As I watched his carriage turn round and drive away I knew that home for me would now be where I and not my parents should make it. I was thirteen.

Then began the sophisticated but quite unworldly education for which wealthy parents all over the world used to send their daughters to the Swiss lakes. Diet and discipline were strict. Angular and unapproachable chaperones grudged and guarded every movement. Yet it was a fine upbringing and gave to those with brains enough to receive it a background of culture which in Australia may be acquired only limpingly through books. The routine of classes was enlivened by summer rides along the sands of Lake Lemman and skating in the teeth of wind blowing down from the snowcaps. Holidays meant trips to Paris and in Italy. This was the education comfortably-placed people could give to children in those years when happy monarchs scattered their image upon a Europe who lay with the richness of a Venetian courtesan smiling in the caress of peace.

For all my feeling that I had been left in Switzerland so that I should be out of the way in Australia I had a loving heart which was attached to both my parents and I cried a good deal when a letter came which told me they were divorced. It was not very long after that Mademoiselle Reuy called me to her room one evening and said father was bringing his new wife to Europe and that I was to leave school and go with them.

Where? I asked.

They are on their honeymoon and will take you with them and afterwards back to Australia.

Recalled in the tranquillity of after years the arrangement seems natural enough but I can tell you it needed more than my trifling veneer of worldliness to embrace the intimacy of travel with an unseen and probably hostile stepmother. Fanny proved to be young and beauti-

ful and she was not hostile but I could not enjoy their honeymoon. She had been a professional dancer and saw to it that we had what is called a good time. Paris first where in the foyer of the Folies Bergères a mischievous harlot made me cry when she whispered Naughty-naughty! in my ear. Then Monte Carlo where a dressmaker and hairdresser between them made the alterations to my schoolgirl appearance necessary to get me past the door of the casino. Then Cairo with the splendour of the East displayed upon the terrace of Shepherd's. Then back to Australia to live in a smart new home at Berwick where wealthy business people kept model farms for long weekends in order that they might refresh themselves with the sight of simple men at honest labour. I have always loved little farms and the outdoor life but the new establishment near Melbourne proved no more congenial than the old one in Perth. Father was not moulded to the domestic virtues. While he and his new wife may or may not have been happy together I had again the feeling of being in the way and foreign to their lives. The dull and provincial city had little consolation to offer a sensitive girl who had felt the colourful breadth of European life and it gave no scope for the ambition which Paris and London theatres had wakened in me and Fanny's talk of her career as a dancer had nourished. I badly wanted two things and these were to get away from home and on to the stage. Father when I told him was neither impressed nor helpful. He did not approve of girls living on their own and like most men who marry across the footlights he did not want to see his daughter there. You must remember we were back in 1912 when the Stage had still a false name for all manner of pleasant evil. Here Fanny became an ally and when father had grudgingly given his consent and promised an allowance limited to five pounds a week she wrote letters to her London greenroom friends which led to a small part at the Gaiety. I soon had the bliss of receiving flowers and even jewels from gentlemen in the audience whom I was both mean and prudent enough never to meet.

You will not need much convincing that the footlights of the London Gaiety had some glamour for a young girl from the edge of the world but singing and tossing your pretty legs about in front of a thousand people is not quite the same thing as acting and at nine o'clock every morning real work for me began at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art where we were made to sweat at Shakespeare and sweat abundantly since every one of us had to learn every part in each play under study. Father remained hostile and as I had to provide food

and clothes as well as pay my fees out of his small allowance plus my diminutive salary from the Gaiety there were days in plenty when I had to watch the other students eating their luncheon at the academy canteen. It made me cry sometimes but it gave me a good memory. I could play Rosalind tonight without a prompter.

The academy was a spotting place for talent and Beerbohm Tree who was then rehearsing Shaw's new play *Pygmalion* gave me the chance of understudying Mrs Patrick Campbell as the Cockney waif Eliza. He offered hardly the remotest hope that I would ever be called upon to play but since Tree was both London's finest actor and the owner of its finest theatre it was a feather in your cap even to be noticed by him. At our rehearsals Shaw used to sit like a Siamese cat in the gloomy auditorium watching every movement and sending frequent notes to Mrs Campbell on the stage. I have no doubt these were hints for the improvement of her acting although I remember it was during these rehearsals that Mrs Campbell made her celebrated remark about what treatment the women of London might expect if Shaw were to give up his lentils and carrots and take to eating steaks. If London's leading actress failed to meet at every point Shaw's fastidious needs you may be sure that I a raw understudy would hardly reach them. After I had made two or three false moves he came up to the stage and helped me through. I don't blame you a bit for not being able to follow the stage directions he said because I can't make sense of them myself. Shaw was often brutally sarcastic to the tritons of the theatre but never to the minnows to whom he was always helpful and pleasant.

Our rehearsals had ended and *Pygmalion* was drawing full houses. Back mouthing Shakespeare at the academy I framed a little prayer to God that it might please His goodness not that He should take Mrs Patrick Campbell to His arms suddenly and unprepared but that He might gently incline her thoughts towards Him by the instrument of a slight visitation of the influenza which would keep her away from the theatre for just a few nights. I was beginning to think of Shaw and Eliza as beings beyond the horizon of my hope when God who loves hardworking virgins sent me His messenger in the person of the great Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree himself. He drove up to the academy at three o'clock one afternoon and told me that Mrs Campbell was ill and I was to get ready to take her cue that night. So for five evenings and a matinee I played the part of the flowergirl who was transformed into a duchess. I felt very like one and even Shaw was satisfied.

Where did you pick up your perfect Cockney accent? he asked me after the first night.

I am an Australian I answered.

Before going on the stage I had been as sick as a cat. I was seventeen.

So ended abruptly my apprentice days. Within a year the producer Cyril Maude had me engaged as his leading lady in a play since forgotten but which had a long run in London and New York. Now I tasted the joy of my own dressing room with my own maid and what is dear to the heart of every woman my own telephone. Maude gave me opportunities to meet on equal terms the actors and actresses who till then had been no more than fabled names. He was a competent producer but as his tastes ran to lavender gloves and tea parties he was out of sympathy with the more robust joys of life and on tour in Canada the next year we had a scene when he refused to let me go on a wolf hunt which the local bucks had got up to honour me. Can you imagine it? A wolf hunt on horseback through the snow! But you are under contract he said and there is just a chance that you might injure yourself in these untried sports so it would be better that you should stay warm and safe in your hotel bedroom.

Beerbohm Tree whose leading lady I became a year or two later was a very much jollier type. Even more polished than Maude he was fond of a good time and careful that all his company should enjoy themselves. He loved wine and food. When he took us to America he entertained us all lavishly at the best hotels and we travelled by special trains. It was a different proposition from the catch-what-you-can life of actors on tour in these days. I played for Tree in some of the superb Shakespearian productions at his own London theatre in the years when West End audiences still had a taste for acting as well as froth and Shakespeare had not yet been sent back to the south side of the river. Tree died suddenly after a season of *The Newcomes* in New York. My enemies put it down to his having me as leading lady.

Thereafter for seven years I played steadily at the Belasco Theatre in New York in contemporary plays with an occasional run of Shakespeare. During this time I married in Chicago an actor and we set up house at Douglaston on Long Island about an hour's motor run from Broadway. Acting is harder work than people who have never done it imagine and with both of us on the stage six nights a week with a couple of matinees into the bargain our home life though pleasant was hardly

a rounded one. There were week-end house parties with tennis and swimming in the Sound and great gatherings of all the leading stage people of the day whom we entertained by grace of our private boot-legger. This gentleman would come furtively and unannounced with bulgy hip pockets but he brought good liquor at a price. His main fear was not of the police whom he could bribe or outwit but of his trade rivals who were tougher. As we were both earning top-flight salaries the cost did not trouble us but prohibition worked havoc among the less fortunate who rather than go athirst would buy the evil product of bathroom fermentations.

Most of the plays we acted then have already slipped from public memory and some of them even from mine. I remember two with George Arliss called *The Mollusc* and *Poldekin*. *Poldekin* failed partly I think because little Arliss had to appear dressed up as a Russian soldier carrying a musket bigger than himself. Another miscarriage was an Italian play on the life of Cellini. Stage failures of this sort were something of a heartbreak after all the effort that went into their preparation. I remember many a dress rehearsal that began at seven in the evening and did not finish until nine the next morning. The same night we would be facing an audience and the critics. In contrast to these Sacha Guitry's play *Debureau* ran for a year. I had the part Yvonne Printemps took when it was first staged on the Continent and with it went a double set of the most fabulous clothes from Paris. Oh those clothes were beautiful!

By this time I had given fifteen years of my life to the stage. Literally given it because to act well you have to give yourself to it wholly. Even with the long steady runs of successful plays I was beginning to find the job too exacting. There is more in life than a career and I had begun to have thoughts of abandoning the footlights for the easier and on the whole pleasanter tones of a home. It was in this mood that I met an Englishman who had worked for Tree and written scenarios for Hollywood. We were introduced in a downtown speakeasy where my husband had taken me one night after the show and I knew within minutes that my marriage was finished. Max was not physically prepossessing. He was not in the least handsome. But he desired me and showed it with an aggressive vitality that made havoc with my stage-bred self-assurance. He and I were predestined.

Yet even in America husbands used to retain some vestiges of an outmoded authority and mine for some reason was jealous. It was nice of him but he had to be circumvented. Luckily all sorts of people have

a receptive ear for the troubles of idolized actresses either on Broadway or anywhere else. An exiled Russian aristocrat who was earning a living as booking clerk in the shipping office made the way easy. He arranged our berths and told us in whose hands a forty dollar bribe would secure a quick taxation clearance. Then he advised us to join the ship at Boston the following Sunday for in the home of the bean and the cod no legal mischief might be performed on the sabbath. My New York lawyer was less trustful of Boston's sabbatical calm and sent a guard of four gunmen to escort me on board with their hands ready in their pockets. Such things were done in America in those days. Alone in my cabin waiting for the siren to proclaim safety I quailed at an assertive rap on the door. It was a pageboy from the shipping line's Boston office with a bouquet as big as himself. Ah what it is to be a popular actress with your name winking wickedly in neon lights on Broadway! And yet I was giving it all up. Giving it up eagerly to savour life with a red-haired actor as far from Broadway and the Haymarket as we could get.

When two people find themselves in Europe with plenty of money and nothing in particular to do but enjoy God's abundance spread before them they will surely make for Paris or the south of France. Are these not the most blessed places on this earth? So following the pattern we bought a Citroen in Paris and took it south where we rented in the hills near Grasse a most astonishing villa which had been built not long since by an Englishman. Grasse is the centre of the French perfume trade and for two years we lived in a sea of roses and jasmine. Seven million roses would be picked every season and taken by cartloads to the distilleries in the old white stone town. It was a good place in which to ignore the world's silliness and some people living about us managed to do it very thoroughly. I remember one Englishman who had gone there with his wife for six weeks and so relished both its beauty and the pernod which he drank every day that when his wife went home he stayed on drinking his pernod and smelling the flowers and had been doing just that for several years when we knew him. Pernod is an insinuating thing Walter.

It's safer for men than perfume Elsie.

Well we did not follow his example and when our lease was up we took a villa down on the coast at Cannes but all I can now recall of that time is an old French priest wistfully crossing himself when he saw me lying on a rock in white bathers. Then we lived for a year in Paris on the left bank not far from Eliot Paul's Narrow Street and

began to think that as Max had two daughters by his first wife who would soon want a home we had better provide one. I loved architecture and wanted a bijou chateau we had seen on a trip to Normandy. Max loved his stomach and wanted an oyster farm we had seen on a trip to Brittany. While we were pitting architecture against oysters as the most helpful background to a happy domestic life Max one morning read out of the paper an advertisement about a small vineyard half way between Paris and the Côte d'Or and a little to the north of Chablis. Max thought that after oysters the best thing in life is certainly burgundy. If I could not have an old stone chateau I thought the next best thing would be the two-storied old brick farmhouse and cellars the advertisement spoke about. So we motored down and drank burgundy and bargained and drank burgundy and bought. Max inspected the cellars with painstaking care and appeared to accept without evident dismay the agent's statement that the eight varieties of apple-trees in the orchard were all of them fit only for cider making. Flowers bowed to a gentle breeze. Hens fled before us. Fat ducks beamed a welcome. Geese craned their necks dubiously. Guineafowls scurried. Plump pigeons flew overhead. Aged loafers touched their forelocks. Then we went back to Paris feeling very happy but with the reservation that troubles every Englishman when he buys a property in France. We would have to get in some plumbers.

La Perrière where we were to live for the next few years was a vineyard of ten acres sloping down in the neat manner of vineyards to the swift-flowing Yonne. It gave a sound red wine of no great distinction but which found a ready demand in Paris among discriminating drinkers. Around the house was an acre of garden shaded by lilac- and cherry-trees and one of those stone-walled orchards you find so often on long-settled properties. In this happy part of France where fruit and flowers return God's smile everything that is of service to man seems to grow and proliferate without effort. We believed that life could be very pleasant at La Perrière.

Yes it was pleasant to live there. The very atmosphere was pleasant. The farmhands and vinedressers worked hard for long hours but they laughed when they met you on the road. Everyone was so alive with humour and good sense. They understood proportion. Wine flowed in the cool cellars and in the bistros but it was not abused and when these people had an inclination to be naughty they were gay about that too. They were not dulled and fearful about their silly little sins. They did not nurture those inhibitions which break so often into such brutal

blossom in the back streets and little parks of Australian cities. They could drink a bottle of wine without making a nuisance of themselves. That is more than may be said for a great many people who have enjoyed the benefit of a pious Anglosaxon upbringing. Why is it Walter why is it that Australians just cannot sin without being sad about it? Sad and ashamed. Why is it that all the time they are seeking like poultry to create a desert around them?

They have been taught Elsie to treat their body as Job's dunghill because they believe they may touch God from its summit.

How He must pity them! Perhaps our convict heritage had something to do with this twisted attitude of mind? But no. That cannot be right. The convicts by and large were not so bad a lot. It must have been their guards who placed us in our rut of hypocritical piety. And to judge by the Australian scene today I am sure those guards bred as abundantly as the rabbits.

Yes it was pleasant to live at La Perrière. We forgot the English language and we forgot English ways and we lived according to the fine order that Gargantua set up to govern the Abbey of Theleme. Like the Thelemites we too refused to count the hours and direct our courses by the sound of a bell but chose to follow our own free judgment and discretion. It is true that our discretion may sometimes have been at fault. In a day which began at nine o'clock with a breakfast of salad and cider from the walled orchard many strange things were likely to happen and it must be admitted that neither Max nor I was of the type to discourage them. For the first few weeks after the plumbers and the painters had gone we were as virtuously busy as any suburban housemakers and over just the same things. I unpacked two big cases of pale yellow handmade pottery from Quimper and put up soft rose curtains from Paris. What curtains those were! After twenty years I can close my eyes and feel their lovely texture.

Wasn't it Remy de Gourmont Elsie who said that woman is a ruminant who remembers the first kiss long after her lover has forgotten the last one? And with curtains it is the same tale. They are the first thing a woman fusses about when she moves into a new house and they are the things she remembers longest when she leaves it. A man will never so much as notice whether they are there.

You do not understand these things Walter. Curtains I mean. They toned so perfectly with the old brick walls which a modern vandal would no doubt have covered with mucky plaster.

Then we set about getting our staff because like all bohemians

we placed comfort and good living high in the list of God's blessings. The vines were looked after by an old man and his son Lucien who lived across the river and used to come over in a rowing boat each morning. To care for the poultry and the garden in the interests of what we understood as economy we installed a married couple and two gardeners. And because Max's driving was terrible even when he had not been drinking burgundy I insisted on a chauffeur. Then as La Perrière was on one of the main roads from Paris to the Riviera we got in a couple of maids to look after welcome weekenders. And to look after my own minor needments I engaged the gentle Yvonne for I had no wish to forgo the little luxuries that become part of normal life when you've been for some years a leading actress. Yvonne was the daughter of an inspector of gendarmerie who lived in a village the other side of the forest. She did not share our devotion to plumbing and when she first saw the bath which I told her she must now use daily she asked with tears in her eyes like the nonplussed Eliza Do you think as I have never had a bath that it would be safe for me to immerse the whole of my body at the same time? Then since Max liked to play the host but disliked doing the wines we engaged as pantryman a boy of twelve summers the poverty of whose home had made him wise beyond his years. The recreation he brought with him was to catch little birds and after perfunctorily plucking their wing feathers pop them into his mouth head crop stomach and all. When he found this form of nourishment no longer necessary he gave it up and clung contentedly to the savours of the kitchen. The last I heard of him he was chef in a big Riviera hotel famed for its *ortolans en aspic*.

After servants children. We brought Max's two daughters from London and sent them as weekly boarders to a convent at our market town of Joigny. Here they were much impressed to find carafes of red and white wine on the refectory tables. This was the way the nuns taught young people to use wine as God intended that it should be used. It might be a good idea for Australian schools too.

After children animals. There must have been a score of pet animals at La Perrière but the ones whose characters remain green in memory were the Italian sheepdog Siki the fox Ninette and the forest boar Tantan. Siki was not altogether a popular dog in the neighbourhood and became known to the peasants as the Black Devil of La Perrière. I can remember two of them almost doubled as they rolled a hogshead full of wine up the steep hillside from the river. The protuberance of their bottoms would have been a temptation

to any dog and Siki was one of the sort who do not resist temptation. Some blood flowed and the hogshead went into the river. But after all he was very Italian and the bottoms were so impeccably French. One early evening while I was returning across the fields from a walk with Siki I heard hoofs pounding behind me and turned to find our neighbour Raoul Bonnard's enormous Charleroi bull within twenty yards. Siki saw him too and he was battered to death with his teeth fastened to the beast's nostrils. Ninette the fox and Tantan the boar led quieter lives. Both developed excellent house manners and Tantan's only fall from grace was when he went grunting unannounced into one of the guest rooms upstairs and frightened the wits out of my mother while she was changing for dinner. He had been given to us by a huntsman from the Forêt d'Othe.

It was a strange wild place this Forêt d'Othe which covered the land from the Yonne forty miles westward to Troyes on the Seine. Much of it was dank and marshy though in open glades one came across primitive little villages bearing all the marks of centuries of seclusion. Frenchmen in general are little interested in the useless sports of the English but they are ready enough to go out with a gun in the hope of filling the family pot and when the dashing and vivacious M. Béranger who was the mayor of Joigny invited us to go into the forest hunting with him we took it for granted the prey would be wild boar or at least snipe and duck. He chose to excite us by reticence and instead of guns he carried only a bundle of cane rods with a few feet of string tied to each while servants staggered behind with enormous hampers of food and wine. M. Béranger led us through the dimmest part of the woods to a dank and evil pool of black water where he bade us sit down. He then tied bits of meat to the strings and gave us a rod each. These we were told to dangle in the pool much as you fish for gilgias in Australian creeks. We wondered what would happen. When I felt something nibbling I lifted my rod and found clinging to the meat a fine fat frog which M. Béranger joyously netted. This was what the sly fellow meant by hunting. It was at this picnic he fell in love with Max's sister. As she had no French and he no English they used to walk about the fields in silence with dictionaries and notebooks. The affaire ended when they went down the Yonne in a leaky canoe.

Had Max been content at this time to sit back with his walnuts and burgundy and act the lord of the manor I should have been a richer woman. Unhappily the sight of toiling farmers and peasants

seemed to unsettle his conscience and he wanted a tub to roll. His first folly was a large plantation of black currants for making the liqueur called *cassis*. While these were growing he drove home late one evening through a snowstorm with three goats in the back of the car one of which gave birth to a kid a few minutes after being unloaded. It appeared some farmer had been regaling him with goatsmilk cheese which he had liked so much he thought it a pity not to have the means of a constant supply. The goats ate up the black currants but gave little milk in return and Max sought new fields to conquer. He had noticed that a number of the farmer's wives were earning pin-money by running a few rough hutches of white rabbits of a breed known as the Blanc de Vendée whose fur was valued for imitation ermine. Max in his exuberant manner saw in these wretched animals not mere pinmoney but a fortune so instead of putting together a few packing-case hutches he had three or four hundred cement-floored cages made up and attended all the agricultural shows within a day's drive to buy rabbits of rare virtue and advertised excellence. To house them all he went off to Verdun or some such place and blandly bought a hangar which had been made to keep the rain off German zeppelins in the first world war. By the time this monstrous thing had been taken to bits and carried by rail through three provinces of France and then put together again at La Perrière to the astonishment and admiration of a gaping countryside its cost was fabulous. Max was untroubled and chid us for our little faith. To my astonishment and perhaps to Max's the first season was successful. Then with disastrous suddenness the bottom dropped out of rabbit fur. I never knew the reason but Max chose to blame the Japs. No doubt the hangar is still an object of surprised comment to motorists passing south on their way to the Riviera.

Max's brother Alan who came to live with us at this time was equally irresponsible though fortunately on a less spectacular scale. He had come because he thought we would need his help to run the farm and to get himself attuned to his labours he went at once to a tailor in Joigny patronized by the cavalry officers stationed there. Clad in what a French military tailor conceived to be the proper garb for an English country gentlemen it was his job to drive the truck to nearby flourmills and buy feed for the rodents swarming under that beastly hangar. The tedium of these humble duties he relieved by lovemaking with the millers' daughters and scattering largesse among peasants drinking in the bistros. Everything was charged cheerfully to La Perrière. Years later, after the allied collapse in France he made his way

down among these people who remembered him and gave him protection. He got back to England to find his wife in mourning and next day joined a demolition squad.

It became apparent that Alan's well-meaning efforts to help us run La Perrière would be no more fruitful than Max's efforts to make a fortune from rabbit fur. We had collected about us a staff of eight or ten people. The three guest rooms were rarely unoccupied and to live on the main route between Paris and the South was too great a temptation not to take frequent trips to both places. As those pleasant years went by I began to have misgivings about my ability to go on paying for all this. Max's daughters too had grown up and though we ourselves felt willing enough to forget about England we did not wish them to do so. Eventually we sold La Perrière and after six months in Paris and another six in Hampstead we went to Cornwall and took an old stone cottage at Cawsand on Plymouth Sound a cottage so close to the sea that on stormy days the spray would cascade down the window panes. We lived here on a more modest scale than at La Perrière. There were fewer distractions and no zeppelin hangars or rabbits but we found in the company of Cornish fishermen a salt we could relish. It seems hard to realize now how cheap and good living was in those years. We had our cottage for a rental of twelve shillings a week. I wonder if you would get one like it today for five pounds?

We were happy in Cornwall but even the most cosmopolitan people have a homing instinct and when Max's daughters left us to be married I took him back to Australia. It was here that he died a few years later on the little farm we had bought since neither of us had ever cared about city life for long stretches. Max for all his high spirits had never been really fit since the day in 1917 when his aeroplane crashed between the lines in France and he lay for two days wounded in winter rain. Two of his brothers had been killed in the same week.

So that is my story Walter and I expect the only postscript will be my requiescat. After Max died Fanny wanted to take me back with her to France but the France I remember is not the France I should find today. Nor is England the England I remember. I have made my brief odyssey and I am content to take what remains of life quietly now by the eurythmic surge of the Indian Ocean and live like Alcinous' daughter remote in this sea-beaten home of ours where we are the outposts of mankind and come in contact with no other people.

To My Lady in the Window

I. Aubade.

First the stealing morning fills
The glossy blank of windowsills
With his rare, effulgent bloom,
And softly in this hallowed room
With the flush of children's sleep
Does his wakeful promise keep.
(Elsewhere, the typist fries her egg,
Or tans the blanched and shaven leg;
Icemen wake the echoing stairs
Where the janitor his slops prepares;
Boarders queue for morning showers
At Seaview, or at Vosper Towers . . .)

But here, what still-charmed disarray
Bids the quickening step delay!
In this lit and aureate cell
Nymphs demure and virgin dwell.
A blushless modesty to view,
Niobe, besprent with dew
Stands in loveliness before the glass
That never sees her beauty pass.
Another, risen from her bed,
Bows in modesty her head,
Leaning to the basin's rim
As in fear (ah, pretty whim!)
Sleep's oblivion had harmed
What the night's last lover charmed.
One proudly stands, sublime and free,
In a mist of corsetry.
One in elastic web and silk
Stoops for the paper and the milk.
A lively scene!

But who are we
Such abandonment to see?
Fitter surely spied by none
But the goatish, peering sun;
And even he, the slave of time,
Fading in his upward climb,
Must drop his hot, reluctant rays
From these delicious negligees.

II. Allegretto.

Now done the pensive look, the satin rose;
Erect, proud, gracious and assured she goes.
Above the whirl of traffic, seen from far,
Dressed and new-born, a sober Nausicaa.
The city at her feet, the idle day
Wrought with familiar patterns gay
(What matter if, somewhere, some traitor hang . . .
Murder in Sindh, or famine in Penang?)
In tailored elegance she seems to pause
Before an ever-open choice of doors—
A morning cup at Prince's for a chat
About her own, or someone else's hat;
A patroness of art, some private show
May tempt her to a struggling studio;
Or smile and stroll about her favourite store
Where the salesgirl, dusty blackamoor,
Sees her, and dreams among the ringing tills.
Outside, rough workmen lean on silent drills,
And drivers pause within the surging track,
Throw dangerous, stolen glances back.

As generals poise the fatal dice, then throw
Death to a thousand, or to ten men, so
She deliberates, a thing of seeming power;
Then seizes her distraction for an hour.
In all her unbought freedom, still the prize
Is blessing and being blest with others' eyes.
Where taste may fail, yet price can be relied
To grant distinction and to furnish pride.

III. Schottische.

Now what harsh sound assails the ear?
Harsh hues, harsh forms, harsh opposites appear.
A glimpse of heath, a cairn of stones,
A clouded tarn, and lowering landscape tones.
Tradition spreads her pinions proud:
Tartans of royal Stewart and McLeod!
Who hove the fiery cross on high?
Who for his Prince and Monarch would not die!
A blackthorn standing in the rain
Evokes the hare, the dagger and the chain.
What though the echo of that warlike gear
Rings false in this upended hemisphere?
Idly that painted eagle wheels;

Or ritual cannon on its wooden wheels?
The name is lost that once bequeathed
The cairngorm and the targe; and sheathed
The troubled claymore on the wall . . .
New vigour here informs them all:

For see how elegantly hangs the pleat,
The drape of plaid from waist to feet;
Now cloth and banner of the Scots
My Lady wears to "gallops" or the "trots".
Soft-leather brogues become the more
Our rough Enclosure turf or loose-box straw;
Beagle or setter leashed in hand,
A black cock feather in her bonnet band
How true each dexterous touch was planned!
For loyally this lopped and orphaned land
With what blind faith keeps all preserved.
And here delighting, here all's newly served,
The fame, the rare romance and story,
Gilding an afternoon my Lady's glory.

IV. Hymn to the Sun.

But now what creatures their fair goddess' limbs dispose
In prostrate, forked and cruciform tableaux;
Who seek the sun, yet carry here
Their own perambulatory shading-gear?
—Gay canvas canopies and rubber mats,
Umbrellas and enormous hats,
Oils, ointments, unguents, creams,
Bundled and rugged like Bedouins;
Huge glasses, blank as insect eyes—
And insect-like, each sunning lies
Expanding iridescent sails,
Or weave elaborate goldfish tails
Of turquoise, cherry, cinnamon, cerise
That mask more beauty than all marbled Greece.
Their outward being all their purpose serves;
The sand bears imprint of their luscious curves,
While the white brilliance of a thousand suns
All faculty and thinking stuns.

Then let the falling combers call
To chase the bounding, coloured ball;
Let green-deep "dumpers" capped with foam, foam on—
Occasions clamour when the sun is gone . . .

But under that enormous stare
 What matter where
 Deceit, or ignorance of government,
 Delay, misprision, discontent,
 Unsatisfied ambition, soul's unease?
 Time flows, and cannot all men please.
 And these flow with him for a day:
 Their polyp colours stud the bay.
 At last, burnt, battered, numbed and blind
 Homeward they grope with stumbling mind.

V. Pavane.

Yet all's but prelude to the show . . . My Lady's day
 Its climax mounts of unashamed display:
 Ah, soul of woman! that submerged and iceberg part,
 Her alter ego, sempiternal, beauty's heart!
 Regal in pearls, or walled with diamonds' cold fires,
 Led in upon the arm of gallant squires.
 Brocades of warm blood colour, growing stems of green,
 A vestal's white, or empress' purple seen
 'Mid lamplit pleasaunces, where frozen blooms
 Advance, revolve, retire, or grouped in anterooms
 Half-seem to move with planetary poise
 Like wells of silence through a waste of noise.
 The heavy trains emit no sound upon the pile,
 Nor airs intrude upon that fashioned smile.
 Inch-long the lashes weigh the drooping eyes—
 Vermilioned lips—and eyebrows' rare surprise.
 What artificer spun that lacquered cloud,
 Or pressed the hollow in that temple proud?
 See, as the swart god's matutinal rising brings
 The busy world afoot, so now his setting flings
 A million suns and streaming meteors abroad.
 Oh, might each prize some Saturn's lust reward!

And yet, not these: nor like a once-smart office girl
 Grow plump, and wear felt slippers trodden out at heel,
 Opinioned, and a matron, and defend the state . . .
 These may fulfil, no less, some being—while they wait
 The strokes of Time, who darkens even suns.
 For here, what peevish, blowzy woman but becomes
 Enlarged and stilled; and through her for an instant flows
 The ghost of love, transfiguration of the rose—
 And she forgets the years, the worry and the fret,

Could pin an oiled and waxen orchid here, or set
With practised hands her hair, and feel through all her bones
That perfect grace, and elegance of skeletons.

VI. Pygmalion.

Now the clock strikes . . .

Now the world makes pause;

Stilled are the feet, and shut the doors.
Hang, heavy maiden, hang your head
Pensive by your chastened bed.
Cretonne candleshades of rose
Summon you to sweet repose.
Did the woodwind throb too long;
Or love, or wine fade with the song?
—Mortal flowers in the dust
Under the stamping slippers crushed.
Now your toilette quickly make.
But look! no hands those tresses shake;
Those arms are cold; no colours flow
Within that cheek; no afterglow
Of hope, or passion, or content.
Ah, there's the tragedy! No tent
Of silken fold can please
Where no ache is, or languor to appease.
Could that charming slumberwear
But charm a living creature there!

That pearly image may not fade;
That knee is stopped, that gesture stayed;
Faith and despair have here no arm,
Nor can age, nor sickness harm.
The clock strikes on. The passing hour
On her brief beauty has no power.
And all that glorious night attire's
But a mockery to cheated fires.

W. S. FAIRBRIDGE

The House that Joseph Built

By H. DRAKE-BROCKMAN

"He wasn't a literary cove, he was a grafter—that's what the dads always said." Thus Mr Samuel Furphy to me as we stood in the garden of his home, a little wooden house, neat as a gum-nut, designed and built by the personal labours of his father, Joseph Furphy himself, no less.

Scarlet-roofed, with white-painted walls, the house sits well back from a quiet suburban road, behind a random garden of rose-bushes arising, in flowering time, from a sweet-scented carpet of petunias, phlox, multi-coloured geraniums, lavender, and tall, hunting-pink gillias. The misty blue plumbago that so delicately haunts Western Australian gardens trails over a side lattice. Pink hibiscus shrubs and lemon-trees throw shadows across a tiny lawn where a sundial half-tries to check the hours.*

"The dads worked in the daytime and wrote only at night," said Mr Furphy, "right up till the end. . . ."

This house is the result of that daily graft. It bears signs of a meticulous care that nightly (turned in a very different direction) constructed, with zest and determination, works that are already Australian classics and seem now, more than thirty years after the author's death, well on the way to international recognition.

Shading the garage stands a Japanese pepper-tree planted by the hands that built the house and wrote (without benefit of typewriter and twice over, if memory serves) the stupendous manuscript of *Such is Life*. In the back garden a Moreton Bay fig-tree lets its roots meander most informally, and a real fig-tree (which, we are told, Joseph tied up on the morning of his death) stands trimly aside, close to what is surely the father of all mulberries. A ladder is at this moment hoisted against the mulberry, now heavy with fruit.

Although I had passed by often enough I first knowingly saw this house of Joseph's when I went, on receipt of an address from Mr Howarth, in search of permission to use "The Discovery of Christmas

* See the photograph reproduced in this number. Mr Furphy has now presented the house to the W. A. Fellowship of Australian Writers, to be maintained in trust as a memorial to his father, and the craft-work, china and pictures to the Women's College in the University. He has also made a gift of money to the University, for the establishment of a memorial library, prize or scholarship.

Reef" in a forthcoming anthology, and also to trace, if possible, where that story was originally published. That Joseph Furphy had relatives in Western Australia and was buried in Karrakatta Cemetery I had known for years, ever since Norman Bartlett, critic and journalist, drew Western Australian attention to these facts in the local press. But that Mr Samuel Furphy still lived in his father's house, and that Joseph had built that house with the hands his daughter-in-law Mattie extols in the Franklin biography—"the most wonderful hands, he could do *anything*, and do it well"—came as a surprise.

I went through the Cyclone gate, stepped on the natty front veranda, twirled the door-bell, and was presently ushered through a tiny hall to a sizeable lounge by Mattie Furphy.

Petite, with features still piquantly girlish, with dark hair silver-frosted only at curling ends coiled at the nape, and with dark, quick eyes—the announcement of her three score and ten years was as surprising as the fact that Joseph had built the house single-handed when he was in his sixties. He had also made for Mattie, I learnt, the "boxes" necessary to carry, in the process of beating, the magnificent copper repoussé panels that, on mantel and doors, had instantly caught my eye. The small hands resting on the arms of a beautiful and dignified jarrah chair had carved the jarrah and hammered the copper bolts holding the russet hide of seat and back. They must, I thought, have commanded considerable force.

There is a typically humorous father-in-lawly comment on that same mantel panel in one of Furphy's letters to Miss Kate Baker:

... for the last couple of weeks she (Mattie) has been spending an hour or so every day at her Art work. Not painting, sad to say, but embossing copper panels and plaques for her over-mantel. One panel of that work—about a yard square—took her nearly a year to belt into shape, and the shape was a couple of hideous wyverns glaring at each other. Which is supposed to be the highest Art. In fact, Decorative Art—which is Mat's hobby—is simply the cult of ugliness. Now, *you* would immortalise Orpheus and Eurydice, or Artemis and Endymion; but critics would pronounce your composition vicious, and your technique damnable. . . .

In addition to the wyverns there were exquisite door-panels of conventionalized quondongs and kangaroo-paws, and the pierced and enamelled banksia design of a mirror backed with a wooden frame that he himself had perhaps made. The biography reveals that he had not had either time or opportunity to cultivate more than a perfunctorily conventional taste in pictorial or plastic arts, and presumably



THE HOUSE THAT JOSEPH BUILT
(Joseph Furphy's Cottage, 9 Servetus Street, Swanbourne, Perth, W.A.)

By courtesy of the "Daily News", Perth.



neither the enthusiasm of Mrs Mattie nor that of her art master made him change his mind. He continued to admire the water-colour and oil landscapes Mrs Mattie painted, which, although of considerable historic interest since many of them record old vanished landmarks, cannot be compared, as she herself knew, with the lovely metal work her "hobby" produced. At least, if Joseph jeered, he helped, not hindered. Her small hands were indebted to his "most wonderful" that built the boxes and laid the pitch foundations in the initial stages of her work. He had something to say of those kangaroo-paws:

Got a few belated quondongs and a large sheaf of kangaroo paws. . . . This is the flower that is so like Australia; none of your mountain daisy business about it, mind; no primrose or snowdrop racket; but a splendid, confident, audacious glory, leaving even the black and scarlet desert pea a bad second. Even the unpoetical Gropers [!—the mark is mine, H. D-B.] claim the kangaroo-paw as their national flower. It belongs to the order of orchids, and has a leaf like the gladiolus.

Mattie's art master and instructor in the "Cult of Ugliness" was J. W. Linton, himself an artist of distinction and a worker in fine metals and semi-precious jewels, whose fame later became known from the Indian Ocean to the Pacific and beyond. Son of a famous Royal Academician, Linton lived quietly in Perth until his death some years ago, and for a long time before that earned daily bread by directing the art classes at the Technical School. My own art master, Henri Van Raalte, always considered that J.W. was a better artist than his famous father. Some of J.W.'s sketches grace the walls of the house that Joseph built, and the hall is lit by a noble example of his metal work, a singularly graceful lantern.

That first afternoon, whilst we waited for her husband Samuel to join us, Mrs Mattie told me many "bits and pieces", and we parted in mutual assurance of many more to come. But—before I called again her quick spirit had slipped away, just as suddenly as, one day in 1912, Joseph's own had fled.

I had gained my sought permission that afternoon and was also helped towards discovery, as since noted in *Southerly* Number Four, 1948, of the place and time of the first publication of "The Discovery of Christmas Reef". But it has been poignant making later calls and re-living with Mr Samuel Furphy the history of the little house.

Mr Sam Furphy and his brother Felix arrived in Western Australia in 1902, which was a drought year in Victoria. The drought drove them

to seek this State, then booming, and join their sister Sylvia already here with her husband. Mrs Sam Furphy was a McCausland, from Kialla, near Shepparton where the Furphys were then living. The brothers left their families to follow, coming alone to spy out the new terrain. They disembarked at Albany, with some idea of remaining, but decided immediately not to seek fortune there. They journeyed to Perth and within a couple of days were at work in Hoskin and Tomlinson's foundry. The wage jobs did not last long. Western Australia was opening out. In less than no time Furphy Brothers had a foundry of their own established at Fremantle, soon earning a reputation that remains undiminished. On general principles Joseph called the foundry "your little swindle", although he assisted there too, when needed, as with the "Cult of Ugliness". For he and his wife came west also, three years later, to join the younger families, by that time well-rooted though still living in rented homes.

This did not please Joseph. Soon three blocks of land were bought at Swanbourne and he set to work to build three "hovels", as he put it. The first two were skillions, or house backs, later incorporated in architect and contractor-built homes. Characteristically, he built last the cottage for himself and his wife. This is the original home that still remains in Furphy possession; and the entire building, other than some plastering and later odds and ends—design, construction and all the rest—is the work of Joseph's mind and hands.

The copper panels were set up in the Samuel Furphy establishment some distance away, and brought to their present situation only after the death of Mrs Joseph, when the Samuels moved into the parents' cottage. Whilst the cottage was building the Josephs lived with the Samuels, and every morning Joseph walked across to this block in Servetus Street, Swanbourne. What he saw and thought about during these walks is recorded in some detail in his letters. Gradually the little house rose, with its jarrah weather-board walls, its flat-planed front, its beautifully fitted window frames and—mark it!—*mortised* doorways. Nothing slap-dash or good-enough about Joseph's handiwork. As well as lounge and neat kitchen (now modernized and electrically fitted, as is also the bathroom) there are three bedrooms, the smallest opening from a back veranda so stoutly lined with oiled jarrah panelling that it is really a vestibule; it houses a particularly fine camphor-wood sea-chest, two decker with brass handles in-fitted, and a top section that opens out to form a writing-desk.

"Just an ordinary little place," declares Mr Sam Furphy.

But not so. The eye of the beholder is instantly aware of that extra spickness one connects with sailors' work—a care in construction, a meticulous loving attention to detail not usually to be found in Australian wooden cottages; amid a whole street of neat suburban homes Joseph's retains an exclusive air of distinction. Utterly different from the cottages generally built at that time (it was completed by 1907) its simplicity is by no means modern. Unpretentious, sturdy, adequate for comfort, it is not in any sense a period piece. Perhaps that elusive quality which Joseph's house suggests is the spirit of timelessness that clings to all work well and faithfully done though the material fabric be perishable as flesh.

Innocence and Experience

1

I see them move like clouded angels, shown
As if far-off—surprisingly so near,
And yet forever lost. Because of these,
I fled from fear to fear.

2

But first, the intervening cloud (which still
Half-hides them from my inward eye) denied
Their diadems and wings. The fog was real
And not mere doubt or dream. The mountainside

I climbed was darkened then; the exciting green
Below had gone, and now no gleam remained
Of their remote reflection. Though the cloud
Was lifted and the hill at last attained,

I only saw, with frightening clarity,
A waste as bone-white as the ocean-shore,
Swept by the animistic wind that brings
These visions back, that madden all the more.

ALEXANDER CRAIG

Writer and Reader

"THE OTHER HARMONY"

Story-Book Only. By Hugh McCrae. (Angus & Robertson, 1948. 30s.)

The stories and sketches in Hugh McCrae's recently published volume of prose selections, *Story-Book Only*, appear at first so slight, so simple and devoid of ornament as to invite the assumption that there is nothing or next to nothing in them. But as one continues to read other features emerge—wit, subtlety, humour, a surprising imaginative freshness, and a rare felicity of word and phrase. Long before reaching the end, one can only repent the premature inclination to dismiss as trifling and unimportant a collection that really is seldom lacking in the attractions of subject-matter and style.

The first two sections, "My Father, and My Father's Friends" and "My Friends, and I", are probably the most interesting and valuable for the general reader. They consist of reminiscences of people many of whom are famous in the history of Australian art and literature, and, as McCrae points out, they cover a considerable span of time, for he himself constitutes a "living link" between our present literary life and that of the sixties and seventies, while his father's list of acquaintances stretched back to "men of the Nelson period". So in these pages we encounter mid-Victorians like "Orion" Horne, Adam Lindsay Gordon and Marcus Clarke, older contemporaries like Norman Lindsay and his brother Lionel, and writers like Slessor whose reputations have been established in the last decade or two. There is not much about their work (though McCrae shows his sensitiveness as a critic in the paper on Slessor); nor, indeed, is there anything very profound about the men themselves. But when we note these deficiencies it is advisable to keep in mind Mr McCrae's words in his introduction: "It is not proposed to explain or to comment on the work accomplished; but rather to show each author as he looked in this world; his character and manners, his appearance, stature, colour, and, perhaps, the sound of his voice." We are, then, to expect not critical estimates or penetrating studies but, to borrow Strachey's phrase, "portraits in miniature". How keenly and humorously McCrae can bring back to life a face and personality is revealed in any one of a score of passages—when, for instance, he writes of Kendall: "His mascot is his umbrella; and standing near the fireplace, his forehead shadowed by a tall hat, he looks like a mute waiting for the funeral to begin"; or again, we are given a glimpse of Alfred Teloe, "who made a whispering-gallery of his beard, so that he seemed to instruct assassins while he ordered biscuits and a glass of milk". Not only individuals but groups too are depicted and a memorable and amusing sketch revives for us the members of the original Yorick Club stretched out in saddle-back chairs (made up of bundles of newspapers) drinking beer out of pint-pots, while on the hat-rack stands a skull with a pipe between its teeth, a grisly reminder of mortality installed by Shillinglaw for the edification of his fellow-members. A notable fact is

that the geniality and kindness of this picture are not exceptional. McCrae writes with generosity of the dead and the living alike. Moreover, his sympathy is readily aroused and the sorrows and misfortunes of his friends and his father's friends touch him closely. One of his most moving stories tells how Kendall, hearing of Gordon's death and finding himself without money to enable him to go to the funeral, wrote a note of explanation to the elder McCrae but, in grief-stricken confusion, addressed it to Gordon himself. "This," comments Hugh McCrae, must remain one of the most poignant letters ever written. A letter to the dead." Yet, while there is plenty of evidence of deep and sincere feeling, it is never so conspicuous as to create a sense of embarrassment. Here and there, possibly, one can detect a trace of nostalgia for the days of the Yorick Club and for McCrae's own youth. That is only natural and pardonable. But he is never mawkish nor is he ever the *laudator temporis acti* familiar in literary memoirs. Nearly always there is restraint and proportion in his descriptions of the people, activities and events of his own and earlier generations. McCrae reveals no tendency to sentimentalize the past. Probably this is because he still obviously finds the present interesting and worthwhile.

Of the remaining sections in the *Story-Book* the larger consists of "The Du Poissey Anecdotes". Du Poissey is an imaginary eighteenth century man of letters, a self-constituted rival of Sam Johnson. His Boswell is his friend Benjamin Harcourt who is represented as having made in the later years of Du Poissey's life shorthand records of conversations and experiences which they had together. The anecdotes vary in scope from the fairly long "Du Poissey Plagiarizes Shakespeare" to very brief notes of the great man's pithy sayings, for instance his comment on the wealthy and dissipated young Sir Everard Gooch: "Sir," said he, "some people are born with silver spoons in their mouths. 'Tis a great pity they are not taught to keep 'em more cleanly." Opinions are bound to differ about such work. It is so unusual and idiosyncratic that judgment, whether favourable or adverse, will depend more than normally upon personal taste. One eminent critic has pronounced it "bookish"; and most readers will concur. It might be added that the humour is often thin and some of the episodes are very flimsy. There is little to compare with the best anecdotes in the first two sections of the *Story-Book*. Yet, if we bear in mind what McCrae is attempting to do, some, at least of these criticisms will appear less cogent. "The Du Poissey Anecdotes" are intended to form a sort of period piece and, as has been pointed out in an earlier issue of *Southerly*, in method and style they rather resemble Spence's *Anecdotes of Pope* and Aubrey's *Brief Lives*. Such a picture as he is attempting to give of the minds and manners of a small, highly-cultivated literary coterie ought to be bookish; and it is probable that for this reason McCrae has deliberately accentuated the bookishness. We should hesitate, therefore, before condemning the Anecdotes because they are just what they set out to be. Furthermore, it should be observed that their strong literary flavour does not deprive them of human interest. Du Poissey in particular has a complete and rather complex personality; and besides his occasional witty sallies against Harcourt and others the student of character relishes his extraordinary vanity, meanness, and cowardice and the equally extraordinary apprecia-

tion of life which makes the final paper, "The Last Chapter of All", so delightful to read. Again one finds there is more in McCrae than lies upon the surface.

Between the reminiscences and "The Du Poissey Anecdotes" are the two sections called "Imaginings" and "Experiences". The titles might be interchanged without ineptitude, for both range from what are evidently experiences in a limited sense to strange airy flights that are imaginings if ever anything was. Here too, I think, the reader's estimate will almost certainly be influenced by personal taste. For my own part I find least satisfying stories and sketches like "Blue with Yellow Lightnin'", "Sitting up All Night" and "Batty the Woman Tamer" which are narrowly realistic in theme and language. It is true that the narrative is sometimes ingenious, the characters are at least superficially lifelike, and the phrasing is often neat and unexpected. But, on the other hand, the humour is often trite and the general effect a little ordinary. McCrae seems to move constrainedly amid the merely sordid and commonplace. He is better represented by those pieces in which the realism is mingled with fantasy. As a rule he just touches everyday things and persons with the spell of his imaginative genius, for he loves the real world too much to forsake it for long. But there are a few places in which fantasy predominates and it is then, perhaps, that McCrae's writing is most individual and striking. Some of his best work is contained in the stories which depict life as it is seen in childhood and in a few others in which it is shown as it appears in dreams. In the former we find the magnification and the distortion of ordinary things and people which are characteristic of children. In the first part of "Execution, Sydney, 18—" for example, the two men appear to the boy not so much as human beings but as ogres of repulsive and terrifying aspect. One "might have been a witch, with double pupils to each eye (one intersecting the other); and a nose objectionably long"; the victim looks down at the stranger, "his equally devilish face—separated by darkness from his shoulders—hovering, by itself, like a bladder through the air." Another instance of childish distortion is the village barber, Mr Noakes, who also becomes an ogreish figure (with, moreover, a doppelganger shadow) as he stands waving his scissors and chanting the gruesome doggerel:

I would rather eat a boy
Than the nicest saveloy.

As one reads these childhood imaginings, one is reminded of Dickens, another acute interpreter of the child mind with whom McCrae often shows affinities. Equally remarkable in their way, though small in number, are the stories which, like "Meet Mr Maggendorf", make use of dream experience. It is to praise both McCrae's literary skill and his imaginative faculty to say that they actually leave upon us the impression of dreams. They are marked by the inconsequence of dreams, by the unexpected meetings of objects and people that in waking life have no connexion; by the fading of one scene into another, and by a sense of mounting agitation and terror. Reality is transformed or completely suspended.

But what more than anything else makes the best of "Experiences" and "Imaginings" such individual achievements is the presence in them of two

qualities which have not so far been mentioned. One is whimsicality, a quality which is found in the reminiscences also and in "The Du Poissey Anecdotes". It is not the sort that we associate with Lamb or Barrie or de la Mare or any other writer in connexion with whom the word is commonly used. McCrae's whimsicality is his own. It frequently appears in comparisons (for instance, "The refrigerator gave a mighty hiccup in the kitchen, stretched itself, and purred like Sphinx at the rising of the Nile"), it is discernible in the queer twists which are given to some of the stories, and especially in their conclusions. Anyone who reads "Breloque", "Adventure", or "Johnson Frustrated" or "The Stick of the Stag and Trees" will see at once that here is whimsicality with a difference. The second quality, a curious power to communicate the sinister and supernatural, also has in it something that is peculiar to McCrae. Scarcely ever does he lapse into crudeness or over-emphasis; characteristically he just chills the blood, he does not curdle it. The best example is again that weird masterpiece "Meet Mr Maggendorf" which depends not upon a coarse accumulation of horrors nor even to any great extent upon direct statement but rather upon suggestion, evocation, and contrast. The tale begins, like several others in the *Story-Book*, ingenuously and disarmingly. After the appearance of the captivating Thérèse d'Enragues it goes on in a setting of shops and fashionable restaurants. The supernatural is introduced indirectly and gradually. There is just a hint of menace in the interchange between Millicent and Thérèse and only by degrees are we allowed to recognize in Maggendorf the phantom of immemorial legend as we get successive glimpses of the "dry face full of cracks and powder" and the "blue spectacles with folded wire corners" which give him "the disagreeable appearance of a soldier blind from the war". It is typical of the subtlety of McCrae's art that the effect of eeriness is heightened by the music of the orchestra which makes the child think of "a horn crying among mountains", a mournful sound which he fancies he hears repeated as Maggendorf, near the grotesque climax, whirls almost invisibly round the wishing-tree. "Sometimes his voice would come to us, singing in a high falsetto, which found in my head the echo of a horn crying among mountains." McCrae has blended rather diverse elements into a delicate and very unusual study in the macabre.

Possibly we remember longest, after reading stories like "Meet Mr Maggendorf" and the best of the sketches and reminiscences, the distinctive character of McCrae's prose. At first, indeed, we may notice the defects rather than the excellencies. It is prose which often tends to be loose and disconnected, to separate into fine wisps, as it were, instead of forming a closely-knit and durable fabric. This is one reason for the impression of fragmentariness and discontinuity left by pieces such as "Henry III of France", "Beach Party", and "The Comedy of Manners". It is also prose which at times is more than a little artificial, with its archaisms, its somewhat finical phrasing, and its too nicely calculated disposition of sentences. But it is as fatal to underrate McCrae's prose on the strength of first acquaintance as it is to underrate his work in general. We have not to read far into the *Story-Book* before perceiving its range and felicity. McCrae can describe a wrestling-bout in terms which do justice to the theme ("A Night with the Raw-Knuckle Boys"); he can give a flick of rather wry irony in the comment of the author signing the umpteenth

presentation copy: "All my friends extol my book but none is so mercenary as to buy it"; he is capable of the exquisite wit and fancifulness that are displayed in the remarkable description of Quodling's insubstantial diet: "If it were possible he would take sustenance in visual terms; by eye-glance only. Two peeps at a pigeon's wing, a stare at ham; or, for some special dish, a brown study of quails served hot on toast." Above all McCrae's is a poet's prose with an unusual power to express all kinds of mental and sensory experience, especially by means of visual or auditory images. There could not be a word-picture much more effective than the glimpse of the fishing-boats which, "on bad-weather days flourished masts like loosely wrapped umbrellas waved by old ladies at a bus which only they could see"; nor a more accurate rendering of a common household sound than in the sentence previously quoted about the refrigerator. Here, it is true, we are on a comparatively mundane level. But McCrae can also convey more subtle and refined perceptions and he can do this in prose nearly as well as in the most aerial and evanescent of his poetry. Most readers will recall the description of the music in "Meet Mr Maggendorf": "I listened to a horn crying among mountains (the mountains—cavernous ones—existed, I knew, by the echo broadly brimming over and flooding the restaurant); then the horn died away, its long note curling tightly up like flowers at sunset"; and, again, there is the delicate and fanciful portrait of Marcus Clarke: "A little man, he could magically lose himself whenever he wished, then reappear like a sparkle of light, passing between shadow and shine, on a holiday morning." These examples are worthy of the poet of "Colombine" and "Never Again". If there were space to permit the pleasure of continued quotation it would not be hard to find other passages to accompany them.

Finally, mention must be made of the drawings which McCrae has so generously distributed from the first page to the last. They partake of some of the qualities of his finest prose—like it they are witty, imaginative, graceful, incomparably light and deft—and, while his literary art stands in no need of aid from them, they certainly increase the enjoyment derived from other features of the volume. Originally and, at times, powerfully conceived, often beautifully written, fittingly illustrated, and, it should be added, carefully and sensitively edited, *Story-Book Only* displays very fully the gifts that have won for its author a secure and enviable place in Australian literature.

C. J. H. O'BRIEN

THE ARTIST IN HUGH McCRAE

We have been swamped with bad drawings for three decades and seen the blessed word calligraphy corrupted to include the innocence of the kindergarten, and the scribbles and deformations of the New Order become at last as intolerably boring as Herbert Read. So it is a pleasure to see an artist, who is primarily a great poet, extemporize with grace and gaiety and link the antics of his creatures with his text in a way that is harmonious and indivisible.

Hugh McCrae has never been accorded by artists his right measure of

accomplishment with that difficult instrument the pen. His line is full of spring, and his design reminds me of a fine skater cutting figures on ice for his own gratification. It is a lyrical impulse that fastens on paper his fancies and good nights, and the humorists of *Le Rire*—that fount of gaiety and admirable drawing—would have acclaimed these emanations of a light hand: for to improvise without a pencil scaffolding is to risk all at a throw, and when the drawing comes off it is all to the glory of the god of chance.

Story-Book Only is a handsome book, one of the most homogeneous yet printed in Australia, and the spirit that pervades it—rare and heady—*pétillant* like the wines of Anjou. Throughout its pages I hear the echo of my old friend's great laugh, and savour his delicate malice and ironical transfigurations of that eighteenth century he loves so well. As I can say with Robert Louis Stevenson that I "mean to read Boswell until the day I die", his Du Poissey is my favourite of all his prose, and I still fail to understand the stupendous folly of regarding it a slight on Johnson, for to be perfectly caricatured is a test of excellence no inferior thing may survive.

We are all over-serious in this age of anxiety, but Hugh McCrae has escaped the infection. Like Ariel he inhabits a higher air: so, whilst we admire the beauty and imaginative force of his poetry, let us not forget his light and buoyant humour and the aristocratic spirit that pervades his clever and spontaneous drawing.

LIONEL LINDSAY

THEATRE IN AUSTRALIA

The Australian Theatre: An Abstract and Brief Chronicle in Twelve Parts with Characteristic Illustrations. By Paul McGuire with Betty Arnott and Frances Margaret McGuire. (Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1948. 12s. 6d.)

Louis Esson and the Australian Theatre. By Vance Palmer. (Meanjin Press, Melbourne, 1948. Limited Edition 500 copies. 21s.)

These two books are in some degree complementary, the first being concerned with the commercial theatre in Australia which for the most part is only a pale reflection of oversea theatres, and the second touching upon the "little theatre" movement to which the majority of local dramatists have had to look for opportunities of learning their craft and having their plays presented.

A book which professed to tell the whole story of commercial theatre in Australia would necessarily be long, dull and of doubtful value. Paul McGuire and his collaborators, wisely attempting no more than a brief sketch and treating it as part of the social history of the people, have in *The Australian Theatre* produced a book not over-encumbered with detail but nevertheless as detailed as its subject warrants.

From the performance by a cast of convicts of *The Recruiting Officer* on 4 June 1789 the colourful and varied pageant moves forward through Mr Sidaway's Playhouse in Bell-row (Bligh Street) to Mr Barnett Levey's "At Homes" and his Theatre Royal in George Street, to the Royal Victoria whose curtain was first rung up when the young Queen's reign was only nine months

old and thence, ever widening with interlude and scenes in all of the Australian States, on to the great days of "The Firm" before the partial famine of the last two decades. It is a pageant rich with incident and enlivened by never-to-be-forgotten names.

We meet the audiences of Mr Levey's Theatre Royal, some members of which were not always quietly attentive or sober, but were certainly no worse than their contemporaries in the London playhouses. The *Sydney Gazette* and the *Monitor*, however, would have it that the noise and drunkenness were all Mr Levey's fault. We meet, too, the audience of gold-miners who carried on an amusing conversation with the grave-digger in *Hamlet* about the depth of the sinking and the return to the tub and then at the final curtain pelted Hamlet, Ophelia and the Ghost with nuggets of gold. Another audience, that described by Colonel Mundy (p. 102), would seem to indicate that a society of a character entirely different from the English was beginning to evolve in the new country.

Unfortunately as the story approaches the present the authors have allowed themselves to be somewhat overwhelmed by the mass of material. Portions of Part Ten, "The End of an Age", and Eleven, "The Young Century", with their long lists of names are well-nigh unreadable. One would prefer a general account of the periods with the lists, if printed at all, relegated to an appendix. Another defect which might be mentioned here is the lack of any index whatsoever.

For those who can recall the plays and players of the twenties and earlier much in the book would, as the authors remark of Miss Minnie Everett's Young Ladies of the Musical Comedies, properly be a theme for a new *Ballade des Dames du Temps Jadis*, while one may hope that others reading it will come to realize that a truly popular theatre is something more vital and more important to the community than they have yet been enabled to imagine.

The repertory and Little Theatre movements are mentioned by the authors only to be resigned "with reluctance (but with hope) to other students of Australian social history". Their reluctance is understandable because in the stories of these movements and in the stories of local dramatists associated with them will be found the beginnings of the shaping of a truly Australian theatre and drama.

Attractively printed, generously illustrated and well-bound with unusually pleasing end-papers and dust-jackets, *The Australian Theatre* makes a handsome volume.

Louis Esson and the Australian Theatre could have been a valuable contribution towards the story of the other theatre, but Vance Palmer has neglected to make the best use of his opportunity. His book is disappointing because it amounts to very little more than a collection of a number of Esson's letters with a few connecting notes to give an air of narrative to the whole.

Palmer does not deal with the period before his meeting with Esson in July 1913—a period which one may be permitted to think not unimportant both in the life of Esson and in the development of a native drama, for it was then that *The Woman Tamer*, *The Sacred Place*, *Dead Timber* and *The Time is Not Yet Ripe* were written and first produced. Their variety alone—underworld, outback, Indian community, politics—indicates that an account of their conception and shaping would tell us much about Esson, his sources of material and

way of working. Palmer mentions them all in one short paragraph (p. 2). Somewhat similarly he outlines the story of the last years of Esson's life in four pages, explaining the brevity thus: "There were few letters exchanged between us during this period because for some years we lived within a stone's throw of one another and met when there was anything to discuss." (p. 107.) But Esson's conversations during those years and the discussions with younger writers may well prove to be of significance in the story of the development of an Australian drama. Even when Palmer writes of the Pioneer Players' productions of *The Battler* and *Mother and Son* for which he himself worked he fails to tell us how Esson regarded rehearsals and reactions of audiences and what revisions were made and why and how.

The inadequacy of Palmer's method in this book is most apparent in the section concerned with Esson's stay at Mallacoota. There appears in the letters printed nothing of the yarns of those stockmen and fishermen who visited the tent and the "eternal folk-tales retold in a new and primitive environment" which so fascinated Esson and were the basis of his play *Shipwreck* (as yet unpublished). We read of these yarns in the Introduction contributed by Hilda Esson to *The Southern Cross and Other Plays* (Robertson and Mullens, Melbourne, 1946) and it is indeed no exaggeration to claim that that introduction, short as it is, tells us more than the present book about Louis Esson and the Australian Theatre.

With his long friendship with Esson and others of the circle who are still living, and his close association with the Pioneer Players, Palmer is in the position of someone to whom much has been given and from whom much is expected. Although there is undoubtedly much of interest in the letters now published many of them are not concerned essentially with the subject matter indicated by the title and it seems not unfair to think that Palmer should have attempted something more than he has done.

W. G. CASSIDY

LESS THAN LIFELIKE

Meredith. By Siegfried Sassoon. (Constable, London, 1948. 15s.)

George Meredith was a great novelist and a great poet though not always a great artist. There is needed therefore in his biographer a rare mingling of sympathy and judgment, qualities which we are led to expect from seeing Siegfried Sassoon's name on the title-page of this biography, the Sassoon of the poems and books of reminiscences being all made of fire and sensibility; but our high expectations are disappointed. Perhaps the method of the book is at fault. Disclaiming any business to estimate Meredith's status as a thinker, or even to discuss the characters in his novels, Sassoon proceeds to give from year to year, in somewhat pedestrian fashion, "a chronicle of Meredith's life and output." True, the life and the work of a writer are one, but in this case the questionable oneness has resulted in leaving with the reader not a single

glowing jewel of the mind of a genius but a bewildering multiplicity of facets of a jewel, not all of them glowing, nor even bright to the memory.

It is said that Meredith once threatened to haunt anyone who attempted to write his biography. Perhaps remembering the significance of this remark Sassoon has wisely left the personality of Meredith something of an enigma, not all neatly explained away and fitted into a theory; a vigorous, morning-minded, semi-pagan personality, turbulent, often frustrated, and always intensely private and aloof. It is the turbulence of Meredith's temperament that Sassoon stresses: for, like his own creation Nevil Beauchamp, Meredith "had drunk of the questioning cup, that which denieth peace to us, and which projects us upon the missionary search of the How, the Wherefore and the Why Not ever afterward". So at the moment when Meredith appeared happy in a second marriage and settled in his beautiful home at Box Hill in Surrey where he was to remain forty years until his death Sassoon shows his discrimination in resisting the temptation to attach a label of Happiness, being confronted in imagination by the "protesting presence of Meredith" who would warn us all of the impossibility of unshrouding an author who, unlike Dickens, liked his personality to be private. With Meredith's turbulent questioning went a grand rectitude and austerity. To his son Arthur he once wrote: "We grow to good as surely as the plant grows to the light. Do not lose the habit of praying to the unseen Divinity. Prayer for worldly goods is worse than useless, but prayer for strength of soul is that passion of the soul which catches the gift it seeks."

As a novelist with a poet's vision Meredith expressed the beauty and the comedy of life. Often he expressed them in a tantalizing way, but at his best he expressed them gloriously, in prose that is "rich, refined, and royal-robed". But to neither the beauty nor the comedy of the novels has Sassoon done justice. We are told that "It is only when they stand in direct contact with Nature that the characters in his novels put on their full grandeur and charm"; and that "as a delineator of womanhood Meredith stands alone in modern literature". Both of these statements are open to challenge, and neither of them receives sufficient support and illustration from Sassoon. On page 148 we read, "It is not my intention to discuss the characters of *The Egoist*"; but such a discussion would surely have more pertinence and value for a reader than many a needless quotation from journalists' impressions of Meredith at the turn of the century. The finely perceptive criticism of the tragic short story "The Tale of Chloe", and of *Beauchamp's Career*, make us eager for more criticism of the same calibre. Light is thrown on to the demerits and merits of the long novel: the excessive complication of the career of Beauchamp charged with too many ideas and intellectual abstractions, the style appealing without pause to thoughtfulness and close attention till the reader is out of breath; the lovely descriptive scenes in Normandy and the Alps, the aliveness of the Comic Spirit at the baffling close of the book, and the "attractive creation" of Renée. But here it is that I cavil at Sassoon's methods. Why does he say no more of Renée than this? Meredith described her in these words:

She was like a delicate cup of crystal brimming with the beauty of the place [Venice]. . . . Her features had the soft irregularities which run to rarities of beauty, as the ripple rocks the light; mouth, eyes, brow, nostrils, and bloomy cheek played into one another liquidly;

thought flew, tongue followed, and the flash of meaning quivered over them like night lightning. Her age was but newly seventeen and she was French.

Had Sassoon quoted this passage and others of some length from *The Egoist* and *Diana* and *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, should we not feel an imperious urgency to re-read the novels? As it is, we are left with a somewhat vague impression of their splendour and difficulty.

To Meredith's poems Sassoon brings a warmer enthusiasm, aided by a pleasant "bias" of the poet-critic who is himself "an inveterate quietist, one who longs for something stilled and subdued to contemplation of experience". It is because of this something stilled and subdued, rare in the morning-minded Meredith whose nature poems are usually vibrant with movement, that Sassoon gives such high praise to "The Thrush in February", the lovely twilight meditation in which Meredith "universalized a moment of experience and gave a self-portrait memorable and befriending". Truly the poem reads like a farewell—"Darker grows the valley, more and more forgetting"—yet in the close is the poignant rapture of both the backward and the forward view:

He sings me, out of Winter's throat,
The young time with the life ahead.

Sassoon is acute in perceiving that it is "the thrush that makes the poem memorable, not the moralisings"; and with the same sure instinct he singles out for praise the purified poetry, free from the didactic element, of "Phoebus with Admetus" wherein the shepherds are simply content to have had Phoebus as "our fellow, the morning of our days", and "Men and Man", and the inspired effortless beauty of "The Lark Ascending". "Love in a Valley" and "Modern Love" have their uniqueness finely appraised: the latter as tragically mature as the former is romantically young

Sassoon finds the essential Meredith in "A Ballad of Past Meridian". We are almost persuaded to agree with him: for here, even if there be no magic, there is a strange immortal blossoming of Spirit from Brain:

Last night returning from my twilight walk
I met the grey mist Death, whose eyeless brow
Was bent on me, and from his hand of chalk
He reached me flowers as from a withered bough:
O Death, what bitter nosegays givest thou!

Death said, I gather, and pursued his way.
Another stood by me, a shape in stone,
Sword-hacked and iron-stained, with breasts of clay,
And metal veins that sometimes fiery shone:
O Life, how naked and how hard when known!

Life said, As thou hast carved me, such am I.
Then memory, like the nightjar on the pine,
And sightless hope, a woodlark in night sky,
Joined notes of Death and Life till night's decline:
Of Death, of Life, those inwound notes are mine.

As the frontispiece to this book Sargent's rarely seen drawing of Meredith at

the age of sixty-eight shows the proud old poet, ravaged by time, but indomitable still and ennobled by the beauty of spirit. For those with eyes to see "the essential Meredith" is here in this drawing, in another medium.

DOROTHY LAW

MIND AND MUSIC

From Beethoven to Shostakovich. By Max Graf. (Philosophical Library, New York. 1947. \$4.75.)

This book bears the sub-title, *The Psychology of the Composing Process*. The standard works on the psychology of music have not attempted to deal with the nature of the creative process. Seashore (*The Psychology of Music*) has written only of the performer of and the listener to music; in his *Psychology of Musical Talent* he has reported his studies of the acuity of musical perception. Max Schoen in his *Psychology of Music* has presented studies of the relationship of the listener to music. The bibliography of the psychology of music does not reveal a reputable work on *The Psychology of the Composing Process*. Both Graham Wallas in the *Art of Thought* and William Wallace in *The Musical Faculty* have suggested the road along which it is probable that a composer might have travelled in his work of composition. But neither of these men has presumed to submit his work other than as a speculative inquiry; neither has claimed his work to be the result of a scientific investigation capable of precise description, accurate measurement and verification.

It was with high hopes therefore that the present volume was received. But "‘They order’", said I "‘these things better in France’"—and "almost anywhere except America" might have been added. I doubt if ever before has such superlative paper been wasted on such a disappointing book.

The work is defective as a scientific study even when allowances are made for the fact that Graf is dealing with that most difficult material—human behaviour. The reader is continually reminded of the old game, "The priest of the parish has lost his considering cap; some say this and some say that but I say—" The data upon which Mr Graf works are as anecdotal as the *Canterbury Tales*, but without the evidence of that curious, stealthy speed or that eye for significant detail which Chaucer revealed. Rarely does Graf acknowledge a source or an authority. He is a good artist but a poor scientist, for he selects his material eliminating or ignoring the negative instance whenever its acknowledgment would spoil the symmetry or fluidity of his picture. For example he quotes from Stravinsky's *Chronicle of my Life*, in which quotation Stravinsky makes it clear that "inspiration" has no place in his scheme of composition. Graf conveniently comments, "This is but an ingenious play of words; it is not possible for visionary pictures to be created by intent and purpose." Yet elsewhere he will accept a statement by a composer which fits his theory.

Another illustration of his technique is to be found in this quotation: "A certain instinct tells us where the music was inspired by outside experiences . . ." (p. 202). Or for a complete burlesque of scientific method note this: on page 183

Graf quotes (from Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony) the "Thunder" theme (commencing on F in alt and descending on the notes of the tonic chord of F minor to F on the clef) and the "Tempest" theme (beginning on C in alt and descending with ornamentation on the notes of the tonic chord to A flat on the clef). From this evidence Graf pontifically thunders forth, "The powers that strike men come from above". The book abounds with such tentative statements as "Young Beethoven *may* have felt" (p. 178), "Stravinsky must have felt" (p. 173), "This explanation is more plausible" (p. 150), "The idea of Bruckner's may have been inspired" (p. 138). And finally when an almost convincing case has been built up Graf brings it tottering down with "Regardless of how well these interpretations are attested to, they nevertheless are somewhat arbitrary and romantic" (p. 188).

Much could be said but little should be written of Graf's style, for his style is horrid. This for instance: "Inbetween [one word] Mozart's harmony and Beethoven's flaming strength stands Johann Sebastian Bach" (p. 84); or "He [Mahler's father] ran after every skirt, brutalised his wife, who was sickly and had a game leg, and beat the children" (p. 131). Or again "Uniformly organising forces are effective behind all musical thoughts which at the moment of musical conception appear on the walls separating the unconscious from the conscious" (p. 329). And what of this—"The technical media and the combination of the new technique with the augmented life values of the ageing composer created Beethoven's masterpieces" (p. 272).

Yet there are some grains of good wheat to be found. There is that occasional thought provoking statement such as the following, "Cherubin, grown up, becomes Don Juan" (p. 201). There is an excellent treatment of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. The work is full of readable anecdotes, musical chit-chat and illuminating comments on compositions as compositions. Graf should have written his last two pages as his first two, for in them he admits his defeat. "All science is limited to experience" (p. 460) "At the border of this mysterium of forming, growing and shaping, science has to make a halt" (p. 461). In Graf's *The Psychology of the Composing Process* science has not even taken its first step.

CAMPBELL HOWARD

SCHOLAR AND ESSAYIST

In a Shaft of Sunlight. By F. J. H. Letters. (Shakespeare Head Press Ltd, Sydney, n.d. 10s. 6d.)

Mr Letters is already known as a sympathetic interpreter of Mann and Huysmans, as a discerning student of Virgil, and as the author of two slim volumes of verse. He comes to the essay with an academic training and a background of scholarship, and this has affected his handling of the form. As scholar turned essayist, he has certain conditions in his favour, and certain difficulties to overcome.

Of the difficulties, the most troublesome for Mr Letters seems to be the task of reconciling the claims of the academic disquisition, to which he is accustomed, with the claims of the prose divertisement, on which he has embarked. "Ghosts",

the first essay of the collection, shows this dilemma very plainly. Having chosen the topic "Ghosts", Mr Letters has not been able to decide whether he should conduct an orderly and reasonable examination of it, and so perhaps make some small contribution to the subject of ghosts, or whether he should approach it simply with a view to exploiting its possibilities for entertainment. Attempting both objects, he achieves neither. Mr Letters begins uncertainly in a light vein, but then slips out of it as he begins to discuss the ghosts of Greek and Roman literature, soberly defining and accounting for their differences from the ghosts of Christendom, and quoting the relevant texts; he attains levity again in some remarks on the séance-ghost, then reverts to rational analysis once more to discuss the evidence of Pliny's letters, and so on to the end. Though "Ghosts" has diverting moments, it "misses" because the writer is not clear himself which effect he is trying to secure, not clear whether the essay is to be primarily an intelligent account of the subject, or primarily a *jeu d'esprit*. The switchings from one level of writing to another are disconcerting.

But it would be churlish to insist on this small weakness, for in it lies Mr Letters' chief strength. When he does succeed in adjusting his scholarly training to the requirements of familiar writing, the achievement is very distinctive indeed. In "Smoking"—the most amusing piece in the volume—the inner discord of "Ghosts" is satisfactorily resolved. Here Mr Letters decides on a whimsical tone at the outset, and sustains it throughout. He demonstrates the antiquity of smoking by tracing it back to the gods (who originated the practice in a primitive way by inhaling the fumes of holocausts); he attributes its adoption by man to the primal human need for day-dreaming, and then proceeds to discuss the various species of *animal fumosum* according to their chosen instrument—pipe, cigar, cigarette. Admiring the cigar for its prestige in the world of politics and for the repertoire of grimaces it allows, and conceding the pre-eminence of the cigarette for trick-smoking, Mr Letters himself declares for the pipe—partly as an aid to meditation, partly as the last bastion of individualism in a collectivist world. For though cigarette-borrowing is rampant and cigar-borrowing not unknown, it is inconceivable, Mr Letters observes, that anyone will ever smoke another's pipe. The pipe will remain private property when all else has been socialized. (Though there is still a possibility of "communal smoking" by means of group pipes, where numbers of smokers may participate, "each with his own private mouth-piece and stem fitted into a huge communal bowl".) Though fancifulness is plainly the keynote of this essay, it is fancifulness reared on a framework of hard thinking. We are conscious of the scholar's logical mind behind it all, carefully pursuing the ramifications of the subject, making one keen intellectual thrust after another, and directing the onward course of the essay so that its inconsequence fulfils a rational design. We smile at one of Mr Letters' remarks, and then pause to think how reasonable it is; we are carried along smoothly by the flow of his prose, then pause and realize how logically the theme is being worked out. "Smoking" unites the informality of the familiar essay with the orderliness and intellectual grip of the academic discourse, and this would seem to be Mr Letter's particular talent in the essay form.

Not all the pieces in the volume are disquisitions on general topics like "Ghosts", "Smoking", and "Posterity". Elsewhere Mr Letters writes about quite

specific subjects, such as "The Bent Street Public Library", "Waverley", "Houses I Have Lived In", and "Sydney Domain". These essays—to resort to an old formula—are successful to the degree in which Mr Letters has managed to make them embody personal experience. "Waverley" is most interesting when the subject is not so much Waverley the geographical unit as the author's private reminiscences of and reflections upon Waverley, and "The Bent Street Public Library" is so effective because Mr Letters has chosen "to dawdle round the general theme of my own experience of the library", instead of writing an impersonal discourse. (Both these essays, incidentally, contain some asides on Brennan which might send the reader's eyebrows up his forehead.) One could proceed to praise Mr Letters' gift for the reflective-atmospheric type of essay, to give specimens of his humour, to admire the grace of his prose style, and to put in a word for the tasteful format of his book. One leaves *In a Shaft of Sunlight* with the feeling that its author has made a pleasing contribution to Australian *belles-lettres*, and with the hope that he will find leisure and inclination to venture farther along the same path.

G. A. WILKES

AUTHENTIC AUSTRALIAN

Golconda. By Vance Palmer. (Angus and Robertson, 1948. 12s. 6d.)

It used to be a commendation to describe a novel as "a slice of life". The phrase might be applied to Mr Vance Palmer's *Golconda*, not because it has the qualities of stark realism which usually call forth the expression, but because of its prevailing quality of authenticity. The book begins, as a good slice should, at some distance from the beginning, and it stops considerably short of the end; yet both the beginning and the end are parts of the plot. Yet *Golconda* can hardly be said to have a plot. It covers several stages in the existence of a mining town, from the point where Capital begins to take an interest in the place, to the point where the place gives up its last stronghold to Capital. Capital is, in a vague way, one of the villains of the piece; but the real villain is in the spirit of the men who first staked and worked rich claims on the field, and who are prevented by self-interest, mutual distrust, disinclination to "be the mug", and a feeling that the Government should take all the responsibility, from making the most of their properties after the first days of easy profits are past. It is the story of any rich mining-field, and the moral is the usual moral of such histories: if those who can won't (no matter what the reason), they must inevitably make way for those who can and will. Capital gets most of the kicks, but it also gets the halfpence. Mr Palmer treats the whole matter dispassionately, except for a sympathetic treatment of the idealism of Christy Baughan.

The authenticity, I think, follows from Mr Palmer's attitude to his work, as much as from his feeling for relevant detail. He does not dramatize his subject; nor, in spite of his method of shifting along from stage to stage, rather than presenting a continuous narrative, does he highlight anything in par-

ticular. He is convincing in his very moderation. He achieves the same success in his local colour. I think that he tries a little too hard to be Australian; yet, somehow—and I believe it is because of his habit of restraining himself even from the outside edge of exaggeration—he succeeds in being Australian rather better than any other writer that I can at present call to mind. A similar authenticity preserves his characters in life. Mr Palmer takes as read a great deal that is important in the development of his characters. We are not really told, for instance, the thought processes that led Macy Donovan to accept the job of union organizer, although this was really the turning point of Donovan's life. But we do feel that he would have accepted it, just as we later acquiesce in his acceptance of the Labour nomination. Mr Palmer really avoids the difficult spots in characterization, but when he does rejoin the track, it seems to be the right one. Even immorality, under his treatment, has an incidental quality—one might say, a normality—from its very lack of emphasis. But I should not like to give the impression that *Golconda* is a dull book. Mr Palmer does not have to exaggerate and to underline in order to be convincing, or to falsify his detail in order to be interesting.

KATHLEEN BARNES

TOXOPHILIA

The Buln-Buln and the Brolga. By "Tom Collins". With a Foreword by R. G. Howarth. (Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1948. 7s. 6d.)

The last few years have seen the publication—or republication—of nearly all the material necessary for the fullest appreciation of "Tom Collins". *Such is Life* was reissued as a whole in 1944; *Southerly* printed some of the short stories; in 1946 Angus and Robertson brought out, for the first time complete in book form, *Rigby's Romance*, with foreword by R. G. Howarth; and now the same publishers and the same editor have given us the other original section of *Such is Life*, separated from it following the criticism of A. G. Stephens, namely, *The Buln-Buln and the Brolga*.

As the foreword to the new volume explains, Furphy's first idea after the separation of the two chapters from *Such is Life* was to make of the detached portions one book, of "two stories . . . loosely federated". The federation must indeed, one imagines, have been loose: the two would seem to have in common only Collins as narrator and an interest in the question of misinterpretation of character—Collins's guesses about Mrs Fred in *The Buln-Buln and the Brolga* being about as wide of the mark as his mental version of Rigby's romance. Significantly, nothing comes of the misinterpretation of Mrs Fred, so that, unlike *Rigby's Romance*, *The Buln-Buln and the Brolga* would seem (unless further reflection shows otherwise—as it so often does with Furphy) not to be another of those variations on the theme of accident and responsibility, "the unfettered alternative followed by rigorous destiny". Accordingly, absence of "point" is, I would suggest, the main difference between the "new" Collins novel and the others—this rather than a difference of tone as is suggested by Mr Howarth in stressing Collins's own comment on the story, namely, "And

so closes a glimpse, a mere momentary peep, into the vast and ageless volume of human insignificance". Quite apart from the fact (which, of course, Mr Howarth would admit) that Collins's generalizations may seldom, if ever, be taken literally in interpretation of the yarns he spins, it would seem to be *lack of significance* (literary) rather than *insignificance* (human) that is in question.

Where the book first scores, as the foreword well explains, is in its delineation of clearly distinguished character types—particularly Bob, the Brolga (Barefooted Bob of Chapter V of *Such is Life*), whose distortion of the truth is "by means of extension of the facts"; Fred Falkland-Pritchard, the Buln-Buln or lyre bird, whose genius is "fanciful construction upon a small basis of fact"; and—may it never be forgotten!—Tom Collins, whose own lying is, as it were, before the event and not after. Secondly, there is all the usual Furphy merit in straight narration when he condescends to it—as in the stories of youthful escapades. Thirdly, there is finer humour than one could have expected even from a Collins version of the art of toxophily (or drawing the long bow).

Whether all this means, as the publishers claim, that *The Buln-Buln and the Brolga* is the most easily read of Furphy's novels, I hesitate to say; even to ask the question is as if one should look a gift horse in the mouth.

H. J. OLIVER

NOTHING TO SEE

You Can't See Round Corners. By Jon Cleary. (Angus & Robertson, 1948. 12s. 6d.)

You Can't See Round Corners was runner-up to Ruth Park's *The Harp in the South* in the *Sydney Morning Herald's* first novel competition. It is the story of Frankie, a Paddington youth, unlikeable, selfish, and stupid, whose first childish sentence was probably "me want something easy to do". His later determined pursuit of this ideal leads him to become in turn an S.P. bookmaker, deserter from the Army, a welsher, a rapist-murderer and, finally, a sudden corpse.

The story fills something less than 200 pages. In one of those contradictory terms, which are found so useful, it may be described as a short long novel, and I suspect that it is actually a long short story that the author has expanded.

In a life-size study of character which this purports to be there is no room, especially in so few pages, for irrelevancies. The whole of the chapters dealing with military camp life adds next to nothing to the reader's knowledge of Frankie. It would have been sufficient to send him to camp at the end of one chapter and, in the next to present him once again in his old haunts, a deserter. Nothing would have been lost and an unnecessary check in action avoided. Another irrelevancy, occurring in the important early formative pages, which takes up little space but which is nevertheless peculiarly vicious, is the reference to Frankie's early religious adherence. I had much trouble to assure myself that the reference was irrelevant and that Mr Cleary had not set out to produce a Graham Greene character—sin, religion and all. Even now I am uncertain and should not be surprised to learn that the author believes that he has created such a character. He hasn't; but what he has done is to write a thriller around a credible but very

shallow character of a pale Greenish hue, to whom the reader will extend no sympathy.

Several of the "love" scenes are treated with the now customary stickling for realism in detail, which is so far removed from art that it is suspect and raises doubts of the author's artistic integrity.

For the rest Cleary's style, Hemingwayish but not so periodic, has the virtue of clarity and his narrative retains the qualities that mark his short stories, some of which I greatly admire. I see no promise in this book of a capacity to handle the novel form and I am of the opinion that, as literature, the novel is of no significance whatever in Australian writing.

PAUL GRANO

OUR FIRST PRIME MINISTER

Edmund Barton. By John Reynolds. (Angus & Robertson, 1948. 15s.)

The student of English history who wishes to know what Gladstone said in 1865 can read the two thousand pages of Morley. G. O. Trevelyan's *Early History of Charles James Fox* might be classified under Political Biography in a subject-catalogue; but for the reader interested in literature and manners it recreates an age. The field of English political biography is wide and rich.

Even if the scale is appropriately reduced Australian historical writing is still, by contrast, singularly deficient in biography. There are big books on Phillip and Bligh and, now, Macquarie. But Wentworth has no worthy biography; there is nothing scholarly on Parkes; Pratt's *David Syme* is inaccurate adulation. There is a rich book yet to be written about Reid. Deakin's *Federal Story* reveals a brilliant mind, but Murdoch's account of Deakin is accurately described by its sub-title—*A Sketch*. Some labour leaders have left memoirs; Evatt's life of Holman and Ross's *William Lane* are the only formal biographies.

A book on Australia's first Prime Minister is therefore welcome. If one shuts it with some sense of disappointment it is hardly the author's fault. It is competently written. Much political history is compressed into a reasonably interesting narrative. The chapters on the Federation movement of the nineties, if they contain little that is new, provide for the general reader a better balanced and more accessible account of that episode than was available before. Neither historians nor lawyers will be satisfied with the two perfunctory chapters covering the last twenty years of Barton's life. There must surely have been material enough available for an account of the way in which the constitutional and administrative machinery of the Commonwealth was got to work for the first time. Yet the somewhat hasty conclusion is not perhaps historically unjust. For the fact seems to be that Barton cannot be made to interest a later generation except as the most prominent figure in the movement for Federation.

The contradictions which make Parkes a fascinating study continue to the end of his long life. It is true that in his later years Barton, as a judge, was necessarily removed from the public storms which surrounded old Parkes to the last. The quiet close was inevitable; but if it had been employed to write

the historical memoirs which more than any other Australian of that time he owed to posterity, Barton's old age would have needed more than one chapter. As it is there seems to be nothing much to say after the Commonwealth was launched. To those who knew him Barton was clearly a man of great personal charm, a good raconteur, a wide reader. We are told these things, we believe that they were so, but he does not come to life. Reid, a less admirable man, remains a person. Even in the pages of Hansard his repartee can still make the reader laugh aloud; it is clear that the legend has authentic foundations. Barton was not given to public clowning. He should be thought of in company with the cultured and fastidious Deakin rather than with Reid; but he wrote nothing like *The Federal Story*. That is why this quite competent book is disappointing. Barton is not a "character". A biography of him must be mainly a contribution to political history. His family have apparently made available to Mr Reynolds all the material they could supply; yet there is little that is new and important. There is an interesting draft of a long letter to Parkes; there are two very interesting letters from Deakin concerning "Hopetoun's blunder", when Lyne was invited to form the first Commonwealth government. But if Mr Reynolds has exhausted the material it seems that historians are left without any contribution to the history of the Federation movement by the man who was its most prominent figure.

J. A. LA NAUZE

WHOE'ER SHE BE . . .

Involuntaries. By R. G. H. (Angus and Robertson, 1948. 7s. 6d.)

Love poems have a very limited range of subject—the first meeting, the lover's praise, the longing for union, the misery of separation, others' hatred or envy, the grief of parting, dreaming in absence, meeting again, consummation, peace or death—such are the lines on which, more or less, any love-sequence is drawn. The only argument for telling it again is new beauty of treatment and approach through modern psychology, and these R. G. H. gives.

His *Involuntaries* tell such a tale in the briefest and most lucid of lyrics, so easy to read and so musical that the too-quick reader may miss unusual images or not note how chosen is the diction; for example, often the simplicity of the English monosyllables is pointed by a sudden Latin word, as "concur" and "defection" in the delightful "Much though it be to live in love" and in xxii, "She *mollified* the rocks", daring, but so much in little! And his love's voice over the telephone—"those hid tones grave in *alloy*" (quality). In "Beneath the winter rays" the unexpected "throat's" content instead of the usual "heart's" content is most biting. And full of meaning is "her *snailhorn-delicate* soul" (you must carefully note the position of the hyphen); is there any organ in nature so quickly and utterly withdrawn at even the apprehension of touch?—apply this to a girl's soul! Again, consider "a Love that of its Nature heales, and stills such cleare Content"; the image of the healing grace of Love is extended by the image of it distilling (think of the slow and patient process) "such cleare Content",

and note the play on "Content", both as the medicine distilled and the contentment of the lover. (There are other instances of this attractive condensation, such as "motive" in ii.) The whole figure is particularly suitable to the seventeenth-century mould in which this song is cast, and the poet is even careful to use the older form "then" for our "than".

Some readers may be offended by the use of Church-sacred terms in "From incubus and cacodemon" (poor suffering lover!) but it will not today rouse the howl of disapproval that a generation ago greeted Professor Marshall-Hall's love verses, *Hymns Ancient and Modern*.

In these days of easy free verse it is an added enjoyment to savour the skilled use of metre and rhyme. Every kind of metrical foot is used, and never does the exigent rhyme excuse a wrong word (unless, perhaps, "yearn" in xvii, which this writer dislikes as a noun). Note, too, the skill of the double rhyming in xi, xix and xxiii, but the delightful experiment in R. G. H.'s earlier book, *Spright and Geist*, "Recalling late-past tenderness", in which each line ends with a word which is a dactyl, giving the effect of rhyming without rhyme, is not repeated.

The Lady of this sequence is strongly sketched: "I know her good"; "Truth, feeling, thought so mix in her"; "she's heart with brain"; "She can jest with so merry a grace"; "a laughing gracious presence"; "herself all sweet"; "dear the wit"; "So young to be alone there"; (her voice) "low and tender, warm and clear"; "Sweetest friend and kindest lover"; "she's so many women". The Impossible She? Only the longing of a poet? Well, she is created now, and lives in this verse.

F. EARLE HOOPER

GORDON, KENDALL AND FARRELL

SOME LITERARY CURIOSITIES

One cannot spend one's life in close association with early printed books without, at some time or other, coming upon rare and curious editions or being faced with various problems associated with the writing and publishing of individual volumes, some of them of importance in the historical as well as the literary field. Many entrancing stories have been written about the history of great English books, few if any about Australian. *The Book Collectors' Quarterly*, now unfortunately dead, is a mine of information concerning early English editions. We have no such vehicle in Australia, so perhaps book-lovers may be interested in some of my curious experiences in connexion with the works of three of our well-known poets—Gordon, Kendall and Farrell.

To begin with Gordon of steeple-chasing fame. Some years ago Mr Percival Serle, the Victorian bibliographer, stated that Gordon's rarest book was *The Feud; a Ballad*: Dedicated to Noel Paton, R.S.A., as a key to his illustrations of "The Dowie Dens o' Yarrow". It was published under the name of "A. Lindsay" at Mount Gambier in 1864. Of this I have never seen a copy, though I live in hopes that one may turn up. Next followed *Ashtaroth: a Dramatic Lyric*, by

the Author of "Sea Spray and Smoke Drift" (10 June 1867), and *Sea Spray and Smoke Drift*, by the Author of "Ashtaroeth" (19 June 1867), followed in 1870 by his best-known work *Bush Ballads and Galloping Rhymes*, by the Author of "Ashtaroeth". So it will be evident that after at least eight years of writing he had issued no volume under his own name. It is on my copy of the last of these that interest centres.

Some years ago I purchased from Robertson and Mullens of Melbourne a copy of *Bush Ballads*, just the ordinary edition in dark green boards, published by Clarkson, Massina and Co., Melbourne, but enclosed in a black rexite cover, with the title in gold on the spine. A closer examination, however, revealed that in the table of contents the pagination of the various poems had been altered in pencil, the pages now running from 1 to 96, instead of from 7 to 102, and that, also in pencil, there were three new poems listed, viz., "B. of F.", "W.B." and "An Unp. Fragm.". Against these were respectively the page numbers 98, 105, and 108.

An examination of the second edition of *Bush Ballads* (1876) in the Mitchell Library revealed that that edition corresponded exactly with the amended table of contents in my own copy, "B. of F." being a new poem "Basket of Flowers", "W.B.", "Whither Bound?" and "An Unp. Fragm.", "An Unpublished Fragment." Apparently, too, it had been intended to omit stanzas 2, 3, and 4 of "Wolf and Hound", for they are crossed out in pencil, but "stet" is placed in the margin, so that they remained in the text.

To my surprise and delight, on turning over the pages, at page 17 I came upon another alteration in the text. As all school-children know, Gordon's "Sick Stockrider" concludes with two lines:

Should the sturdy station children pull the bush-flowers on my grave
I may chance to hear them romping overhead.

But in this copy, written in ink, on the blank space at the end of the poem was an additional stanza and a new ending:

I don't believe I shall though. For I feel like sleeping sound.
Those dreams they say are doubtful; true, but yet
At least it matters little to the dead man underground,
What the living men remember or forget.
These problems that perplex us, in the world's unequal strife
The future may ignore or may reveal,
Yet some as weak as water, Ned, to make the most of life
Have been to face the worst as true as steel.

To my friend that good old Melburnian patron of the arts, and authority on Adam Lindsay Gordon, I wrote at once asking him for a specimen of Gordon's handwriting. When I examined a photostat copy of a typical letter from A.L.G., which he sent me, there was no longer any doubt. I had managed, accidentally, to acquire not only the author's own copy of his *Bush Ballads and Galloping Rhymes*, but also that one which contained the extra stanza to the "Sick Stockrider", which, however, he did not print in the second edition of 1876. It is still not widely known, though it may be found in the notes to Robb's edition of Gordon's poems, with slight verbal differences, on pages 377-8.

Let us now return to Mr Percival Serle and to another of the entries in his *Bibliography of Australian Poetry*. The date is 1878, the place of publication Albury, the publisher the *Border Post Office*, the author J. O'Farrell, and the title of his work *Ephemera: an Iliad of Albury*.

J. O'Farrell is, of course, the well-known poet John Farrell (1851-1904), author of *How He Died and other Poems*, and *My Sundowner and other Poems*. Born in Buenos Ayres, John Farrell was brought as a baby in 1852 to Victoria where, later, he worked as a farmer and prospector, before settling down for some years as a brewer in Albury, where *Ephemera* was written.

When, in 1904, the late Bertram Stevens edited the Memorial Edition of John Farrell's *My Sundowner and other Poems*, with a memoir and notes, he included the following statement:

The preface to the first canto of the "Iliad of Albury" stated that it was the author's intention, if his leisure would permit, to write and publish his extravaganza at intervals of about one month. I have been able to obtain a copy of the first canto only and cannot ascertain whether or not further instalments were published as promised. Mr James Allan, an old friend of Farrell's, tells the story of how "Ephemera" came to be written. Two or three of Albury's literary men were discussing Byron's "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers", when Farrell exclaimed "I could write that sort of stuff by the yard". One of his companions replied, "If you can do that, there's no need for you to be working for the Albury brewery." The upshot was "Ephemera".

And thus the matter remained for more than forty years. Apart from Bertram Stevens's note, no evidence of the publication of the poem had ever been discovered. Even in the Mitchell Library no copy was to be found.

Not so very long ago, I mentioned the supposed publication of *Ephemera* to a good friend of mine, Horace Stelling, long resident in Albury, asking him to question any old-timers whom he should happen to meet, about the book. Even after many days the bread cast upon the waters failed to return. Then, early one morning, on my way to Melbourne, on Albury station waiting to meet me were Horace Stelling and an old lady whom we shall call Miss M. In her hand was a little black note-book, within which, accompanied by a number of newspaper cuttings, stitched together with white cotton and somewhat disfigured by names and a rubber stamp, was *Ephemera: an Iliad of Albury*. In a brand-new dress of full morocco, with dentelles and titles in gold, washed and cleaned as only the skill of Harry Syrett Green, that great craftsman, could restore it to its pristine condition, it is now a thing of beauty, and a literary joy for ever. Interesting, too, was one statement of Miss M., to whose father the book originally belonged. "You know," she said, "many years ago a Mr Stevens of the *Bulletin* borrowed this copy of ours when he was writing a book about old John Farrell." Romance! Romance!

Let us skip only two years, and come now to 1880, and again to Mr Serle's *Bibliography of Australian Verse*. The subject is Henry Kendall (1841-1882); the publisher, William Maddock of 381 George Street, whose business in those days was next door to the present shop of Kodak's; the printers, Gibbs Shal-land and Co.; and the book itself, *Songs from the Mountains*. For part of this story I am indebted to the late W. J. Lockley who, under the pen-name of

"Redgum", contributed many nature-study articles to Sydney periodicals. In 1880 he was an apprentice in the office of William Maddock.

If by any chance you possess an original edition of *Songs from the Mountains* in green cloth covers and looking at pages 144-52 you should find, as you probably will, a poem entitled "Christmas Creek", you will at once know that you do *not* own the rare and original first suppressed edition, because the number of copies of this latter that have survived may possibly be counted on the fingers of your two hands. In fact, one of Sydney's leading booksellers told me recently that, in more than thirty years' experience, he had seen only one copy, that in my possession. What is the story behind the suppression?

Amongst the New South Wales politicians in those years was a certain Ninian Melville, the son of a pork butcher and undertaker, and himself by profession an undertaker. For some reason which I have never been able to discover, Kendall, generally a man of mild disposition, developed against Melville a tremendous antipathy which found expression in his one great satirical poem, inserted at pages 144-52 of the original first edition of *Songs from the Mountains*. To appreciate the full strength of Kendall's castigation of Melville one must, naturally, read the whole text. The initial stanza—there are eight—is one of the mildest:

Sing the song of noisy Ninny—hang the Muses—spit it out
(Tuneful Nine, ye needn't help me—poet knows his way about!)
Sling me here a penny whistle—look alive, and let me slip
Into Ninny like a father,—Ninny with the nimble lip.
Mister Melville, straight descendant from Professor Huxley's ape
Started life as mute for daddy, pulling faces, sporting crape;
But, alas, he didn't like it—lots of work and little pay!
Nature whispered, "You're a windbag—play your cards another way."

Then follow scurrilous references to Melville's attacks on the Church, where he "slipped into the priests and parsons", "cut the Bible into bits"; how he took to "stumping on the Racecourse," "cracking up the working man," "soaping down the 'orny-anded", "being the boss of every strike", and all in the hope of ultimately entering the House in Macquarie Street, and of being offered a "tip" by Sir Henry Parkes. In the last stanza, however, Kendall rises above mere invective, for even though "the windbag bouncing into Parliament" is his shuttlecock the poet can still appreciate the dignity of that institution.

As soon as the books were printed, copies were sent round to Sydney book-sellers. Within a half-hour or two the news of the satire reached the ears of "Noisy Ninny"—such news in those early days travelled fast. According to "Redgum" Melville acted at once, threatened the direst penalties of the law against all and sundry—author, printer, publishers, distributors. "We boys in Maddock's office," said "Redgum", "were sent round post haste to gather in every copy. Alas! too late, a few had been sold, those which today comprise the much sought after suppressed edition. Whether the whole original edition, when recalled, was destroyed, or the offending poem merely removed and replaced by the new poem Christmas Creek, I cannot say."

Not so very long ago, when examining another recently acquired copy of *Songs from the Mountains*, the "Christmas Creek" edition, I was surprised when

there fell out of it a small fourteen-page pamphlet. It was a "separate" edition of "The Song of Ninian Melville", printed with another poem, "A Tour of Hell", by "Frank the Poet", whom I later identified as Frank Goddard. This booklet was issued under the editorship of J. Whitley, and printed at Parramatta, round about 1903—it is not dated—by the *Times* Printing Works. There was also an earlier separate edition of the same two poems, printed in Sydney by Whitley in 1885, but I have never seen a copy. And so, after nearly seventy years of obscurity, Ninian Melville obtains a very tiny measure of poetical immortality.

GEORGE MACKANESS

COLUMBUS

Graphologists have a variety of reasons to explain the habit of underlining one's signature. It has something to do with the desire for clarity and definiteness. A man who underlines his signature doesn't like being misunderstood.

All his life Christopher Columbus was misunderstood. Now I feel my sequence of poems on Christopher Columbus* is misunderstood, and the fault is mine. I tried to say too much with too few words. So, here is an attempt to clarify poems with a heavy underline of prose.

A mediocre poet, finding a certain identification with the historical Columbus, grabs him as a symbol. The symbol then becomes too big for him. The tyro attempting too much, too ambitiously—this is an aspect of the Columbus myth not fully realized at the time of writing the first poems. The mystic setting out from the shores of solid Europe to explore the new world of metaphysics, ill-equipped, taking all his faults and aberrations with him: this was realized. The search of mankind for a better world, Paradise on earth: this too was realized, as was also the strange parallel between the "archetype" myths of the journey westward in search of St Brandon's Isle, Avalon, the Isle of the Blest, or the Hawaiki of the Maori, or the "land where no one labours" of the Australian Aborigine. Man approaches Paradise loaded down with his sins, and suffers accordingly. Only the perfect can enter. Pilgrim is led off the path to Heaven by his own desires and imperfections. The nearer the hand approaches the source of light, the bigger and blacker the shadow it casts. These things were fully realized.

What was not fully realized was that Columbus could also be a symbol for the "imaginative mind that must seek though it may never find a harmonious relationship between itself and the world of personal and social conflicts around it, of good intentions that are followed by bad results, of the intermingling of material and religious motives, and of all the turns and checks of an earthly pilgrimage which contains within it a search for a brave new world in which human endeavour is more closely related to dreams of perfection". And so, what is closest to a man's heart finds expression in art all unknown to him, or another Columbus comes along and talks a sententious philosophy, a doubtful geography, with all the conviction of the fanatic, the intellectually ill-equipped. Not galleons are available, at least for discovery, but leaky caravels,

* The Caxton Press, Christchurch, New Zealand, 1948, 6s.

which, if they are lost and the madman drowned, it matters not a whit. Galleons are for consolidation after the way has been shown, not for risky ventures into the unknown.

We therefore admit we are not a philosopher. However, we must philosophize, and, if we invent a pear-shaped world, are convinced that Paradise is reachable by human endeavour, and even if we reduce it to a fifth its proper size, we have at least proved, not the roundness of the world, of which we are already convinced, but the existence of another continent. But we don't believe there is another continent; the expert geographers, colonizers and explorers who come after us prove this. We are certain we have found the east by sailing west, and we are convinced in our stupidity that the earthly paradise exists somewhere hereabouts.

What does all this add up to? A gorgeous muddle, a most beautiful, poetic and tragic muddle. This prosy underline is an attempt to resolve that muddle.

Columbus carried over intact into the new world of the Renaissance the medieval conception of the existence of a Terrestrial Paradise, or Paradise on Earth, or the East as a region bordering on Paradise and offering access to it, rather than as the goal in itself of Columbus's endeavour.

The very first thought that came to mind, coincidentally with the sudden appearance of the first lines of the first *Columbus* poem, "Columbus Goes West", floating out of nowhere into consciousness, was the fascinating parallel between the actual transformation, from his discovery on, of the world from a flat disc to a sphere, and the paradox that afflicts us today, namely, that Eastwards is one direction, leading off into infinity, and Westwards is another.

There are two directions, but on the surface of a sphere they do not go off into infinity. Surely this conflict between material and religious motives, the either-or of Communism and Religion, is mankind living in a world that may be round in a physical sense, but is certainly still flat in a psychological, or philosophical one. We are medieval all over again. In spite of his happy blunderings, Columbus at least tries to inhabit a world that is truly round. No wonder harmonious relationship is so difficult when everything he says and does relates to the knowledge of the reality of the sphere and has grown beyond the naive conception of the disc. Here truly is a reason for apparent contradictoriness. We may sail West as we please, and call it materialism, romanticism, the mastery of natural forces and the harnessing of them in the service of man, or we may sail East and call it religion, faith, theosophy, classicism, mysticism, whatever we will; or West may be Action, and Eastward, Contemplation and Meditation. But when these apparently irreconcilable opposites are applied to the surface of a psychological sphere they are reconciled, and the world is one.

W. HART-SMITH

IN MEMORY

ARTHUR JOHN ALFRED WALDOCK

On Saturday 14 January the community was shocked to learn that Professor A. J. A. Waldock of the Chair of English Literature in the University had died

after a short illness. Professor Waldock was also a Patron of the English Association and a past Executive Officer. He was so widely known and so highly regarded that it is felt many might like to pay tribute to his memory in the pages of *Southerly*. Recollections and appreciations are therefore invited, to be published in full if space permits. A portrait will accompany such contributions.

FRANCIS WILLIAM WENTWORTH RHODES

Frank Rhodes, lecturer in English at the University, Sydney, died on 29 November, 1949. A New Zealander by birth, he was an Oxford graduate and a former Professor of English at the University of Rangoon. He served the English Association as a committee member and a member of the *Southerly* advisory sub-committee. His witty reviews in *Southerly* were much appreciated and it is to be regretted that they were all too few. He had also participated with Professor A. G. Mitchell in the broadcast series "Is it Good English?" An amusing conversationalist, a fluent lecturer, a considerable linguistic scholar, he has left the impress of his personality on University and general cultural life.

CORRESPONDENCE

CHARLES HARPUR

The Editor of *Southerly*,
Dear Sir,

I should like to draw attention to the great interest that attaches to a number of articles on the life and art of Charles Harpur, written by Mr C. W. Salier and published in recent numbers of *Southerly* and the *Australian Quarterly*. Mr Salier brings love and care to his study of one of the most compelling themes which nineteenth-century Australia has to offer, and it is much to be hoped that his pioneer efforts will in the near future be followed by a book or books representative of the best of Harpur's work in poetry and in literary criticism.

As regards Harpur's first published poem, Mr Salier has suggested* that "The Death of Shelley", which appeared in 1840, probably preceded the rest of his verse into print. It may be worth noting, however, that some three years earlier at least six of Harpur's poems were included in the pages of James Tegg's *Literary News*, a remote precursor of *Southerly*. This journal began in Sydney on 12 August 1837, and, four months later, in the number dated 2 December, there appeared the following "Sonnet" above the pseudonym *Stebii*:

Most glorious is that firstling burst of light,
Down streaming from the opening eye of morn;
When like a Fairy Palace stands the thorn,
Bough storying over bough, all dew bedight;

* In his "The Little Learning of Charles Harpur", *Australian Quarterly*, Vol. 19, No. 1, March, 1947, p. 6.

And sweet the melodies that then are born
 In the deep copse, or wanton waving boughs,
 Of pine and myrtle. Dear the gradual close
 Of shadowy eve, along whose purple sky
 Elysiums float in dreamy pageantry;
 Making it bliss to *Be*. Then serpent night
 How grateful with her silent seeming Queen,
 Amidst the starry flocks, far-coming seen.
 Yet even these molest my ear and sight,
 If thou, Idalia! sharest not each delight.

This, whatever its crudities, is the authentic voice of the young Harpur, exuberant and hopeful as it was before the long years of misfortune and neglect had taken their toll. The "Sonnet" offers, too, a striking example of the manner in which Harpur, a passionate if not always happy craftsman, might jettison an early poem in order to incorporate portions of it in later work. The first five lines subsequently went to "Morning" and the six lines commencing "Dear the gradual close" went to "Noon, Evening and Night", both of which sonnets were published in *Thoughts* eight years later. In addition, the final couplet clearly suggested the conclusion to the first sonnet in the love sequence, which reads:

Yet to confirm and fix the charm of all,
 Love must be near us with its magic glance†.

The remaining five poems in the *Literary News*, though worthy of study, barely disclose the promise latent in this "firstling burst".

May I also point out that Kendall's poem, beginning "Ah! often do I wait and watch", quoted by Mr Salier in his "Harpur and Kendall, Footnotes to a Friendship",‡ was included by Bertram Stevens in his 1920 edition of Kendall, but without any indication as to whom the verses were supposed to celebrate?

Yours etc.,

MUIR HOLBURN

[Mr Salier, to whom this letter was shown by the Editor, thanks Mr Holburn for his complimentary remarks and expresses appreciation of his contribution to our knowledge of Harpur. He comments:

Tegg's Literary News: Kendall so styles it, though the editor was William a'Beckett. I had been prompted to a suspicion that "Stebii" was Harpur: Mr Holburn places it beyond doubt.

"Idalia", in the last line, is the same name as Harpur used in some of his "Australian Lyrics" in the *Australian Chronicle* in 1842, and I am led to suspect that *all* these "Lyrics" date in origin to the mid-thirties. Not only the name but also the spirit and tone are the same; though as they are love-poems that is not conclusive.

† Harpur's editors have been at some pains to "improve" this couplet. In the *Poems* of 1883 it became "And yet we feel not the full charm of all, | Till love be near us with his magic glance." Messrs Gifford and Hall in their *Selected Poems of Charles Harpur* contribute this interesting emendation, "Till love be near us with *her* magic glance" (my italics).

‡ *Southerly*, Number Two of 1948, pp. 102-103.

Footnote †: Harpur has been unhappy in his "choice" of a posthumous editor M, who (and therefore also Gifford) is textually unreliable.]

NOTES AND COMMENTS

The Oxford History of English Literature—The promise held out by the first volume in this series to be published, *The Literature of the Earlier Seventeenth Century*, which was reviewed in *Southerly*, Number Four, 1947, has not been fulfilled by the second volume, *English Literature at the Close of the Middle Ages*, by Sir Edmund Chambers—still less by the third, *Chaucer and the Fifteenth Century*, by H. S. Bennett. (These are really the two parts of the one volume, issued in reverse order.) Diverging from what would appear to have been the aim of the series, comprehensive treatment, Sir Edmund Chambers provides four separate essays, on Medieval Drama, The Carol and Fifteenth-Century Lyric, Popular Narrative Poetry and the Ballad, and Malory; whilst Professor Bennett, believing that there is little left to say on Chaucer, largely contents himself with a social history of the period.

It is announced that the contemporary volume of the history is to be the work of J. I. M. Stewart, who was Professor of English Literature at the University of Adelaide from 1934 to 1945.

The British Poetry Association—Under the patronage of Her Grace the Duchess of Wellington (who is better known as Dorothy Wellesley, the poet and friend of Yeats), the British Poetry Association has been founded "to encourage the appreciation, study and development of poetry throughout the United Kingdom, and to assist young and unestablished poets by impartial criticism, advice on markets, and publication of their work". It will issue a quarterly magazine, and will also institute Associateships and Fellowships "for those possessing the requisite qualifications". The activities of the Association are to be extended throughout the British Commonwealth and America, the Commonwealth Director appointed being Mr Lionel Monteith, editor of *Poetry Commonwealth*, and the Australian representative, the Editor of *Southerly*. The subscription rates (including the magazine) are: Members, 15s., Associates, £1 1s., Fellows, £2 2s. (sterling) per annum. The Hon. Secretary is Mrs Lallie Roberts, 89 Bowring Park Avenue, Liverpool, 16, England.

Novel Prize—According to the Sydney *Sunday Sun* of 24 April 1949, the prize for the Daily Telegraph's 1945-6 novel competition was awarded to Dymphna Cusack and Florence James in collaboration for *Come in Spinner*, on the American "occupation" of Australia during the past war. Congratulations are offered to the authors. Miss Cusack is well known as a novelist and playwright, her publications including *Jungfrau*, *Pioneers on Parade* (with Miles Franklin), *"Four Winds"* and *a Family* (with Florence James), (novels); *Morning Sacrifice* and *Red Sky at Morning* (plays).

Mr Macartney's Lectures—The course of Lectures for the Commonwealth Literary Fund delivered at the University of Sydney in Australian Literature during September and October was: The Literary Discovery of Australia —A. Poetry: 1. The Colonial Period to Harpur, 2. Gordon and Kendall, 3. The Bush Balladists, 4. Bernard O'Dowd, 5. "Furnley Maurice"; B. Prose: 1. The Convict Days, 2. Early Colonial Society, 3. Joseph Furphy, 4. The Short Story in the 'Nineties, 5. The Literature of the North.

"Gabble, gabble, moil and babble"—As two recent productions of Shakespeare

demonstrated, the current aim is to speed up the dialogue and slow down the action of a play—both of which are contrary to the Elizabethan idea. In the Canterbury Players' *Othello* and the Independent Theatre's *Measure for Measure*, speeches were gabbled off at a great rate from the beginning (where, be it noted, it is particularly important to impress the situation on the audience), whilst the scene was frequently changed by means of curtains, switching of properties, setting up of symbolical devices, and so on. Nor were even some of the critical passages in the play intelligently spoken, the worse offenders here being the Canterbury Players, who seemed too young to have a thorough comprehension of *Othello*. In contrast, commendation may be retrospectively offered to the Sydney University Dramatic Society for its *Pericles*, produced the year before last. The diction was admirable, the changes of scene managed expertly and swiftly. But apparently there still lacks a producer who will work from the Quartos and Folios with a scholar's knowledge of the meaning of the text, and will be prepared to make use of the simple but effective structure of the Elizabethan stage.

British Council Pamphlets—Drama Since 1939, by the famous actor Robert Speaight, provides a summary of recent writing and production in England, though it unaccountably omits any mention of Charles Williams, Dorothy Sayers, Christopher Hassall and other contributors to the new ecclesiastical poetic drama. *Painting Since 1939*, by Robin Ironside, offers some excellent reproductions in colour (what is a painting without its colour?) and incidentally illustrates the difficulties of "reading" contemporary art, for the caption to David Jones's *Guinivere*, 1940, appears alongside the picture instead of beneath it, making all the difference between the figures' recumbency and their standing precariously on one leg or on their heads.

Lack of Literary News—Disappointment is felt that in their new publications, *Home* and the *Sunday Herald*, John Fairfax and Sons have not provided literary supplements or at least adequate review sections. Little space is now allotted to books in the *Saturday Herald*, and in none of the three publications do new Australian books receive more than occasional notice. At present only the *Bulletin* and *Southerly* attempt to review Australian works with something like completeness and thoroughness. Any omissions in *Southerly* are variously due to failure of publishers to send review copies, voluntarily or on request (acknowledgments are made in "Publications Received"); to silent possession of books by reviewers to whom they are entrusted in good faith; and to mere oversight or accident.

Milton and Camoens—In his study of the epic, *From Virgil to Milton*, Dr C. M. Bowra reverts to the Portuguese form "Camões" of a name that we know traditionally as "Camoens". To be consistent, he should also write "Ὀμηρος" and "Vergilius". There seems to be no reason, especially in reference to Fanshawe's translation of the *Lusiad*, for deserting the form of the author's name made current by Fanshawe, which represented its English pronunciation.

Dr Bowra also seems to be uncertain whether Milton had read Camoens in the original. That Milton could read the original does not seem open to doubt. His mastery of the other main Romance languages is known, and in any case Portuguese at that time was still so close to Latin that it would have presented

no difficulty to him. Of course he must have known Fanshawe as well, but he could hardly have remained content with a translation, however good.

E. J. Brady—Admirers of Mr E. J. Brady, the noted author, who is now in his eighty-first year, were recently invited to join in a testimonial to him, which was arranged by Mr O. A. Mendelsohn of "Serendip", Lara, Victoria. In consequence an account of nearly £300 was subscribed, and handed to Mr Brady "in appreciation of his long and high devotion to Australian letters." The Commonwealth Literary Fund will also sponsor the publication of a selection from his poems.

The Eureka Stockade—From his preface to *Blood on the Wattle: A Play of Eureka*, by Leslie Haylen, M.P., it is evident that the former Prime Minister subscribes to the view that the Eureka Stockade incident in 1854 represents an important stage of Australian history. "Eureka," he writes, "symbolizes the beginning of our early struggles for political equality. . . . It was greater in significance than the short-lived revolt against tyrannical authority would suggest. . . . It was the first real affirmation of our determination to be the master of our own political destiny." This rather seems to offer an incitement to the disgruntled middle-class to throw up barricades in Martin Place and refuse to pay its social services tax assessments.

In an article on the revival of interest in the Stockade, in *Meanjin*, Number 4, 1948, Mr Rex Rienits remarks that "the subject was used as a background for a few novels, notably, of course, Henry Handel Richardson's *Fortunes of Richard Mahony*." The classical treatment of the incident is, however, in the longer version of Clarke's *For the Term of his Natural Life*, 1874. Leonard Mann also handled it in his novel *Human Drift*, 1935.

Australian Poetry—"There are only two centres of culture in this country where poetry of high quality is affirmed: the *Bulletin* and the publishing house of Angus and Robertson" (Norman Lindsay in the *Bulletin*, 20 April 1949). Mr Lindsay means, of course, contemporary Australian poetry and publishing centres, and no doubt he would include *Southerly*, as an Angus and Robertson publication, which he approves as "authoritative". Other centres, not primarily concerned with publishing, which uphold the best of current Australian poetry are the Universities, the English Association, and the Fellowship of Australian Writers.

Hail Tomorrow!—Criticism of M. Barnard Eldershaw's recent novel, *Tomorrow and Tomorrow . . .*, has generally overlooked the apparently subversive nature of its doctrine. With political argument one can of course agree or disagree, but the design of *Tomorrow and Tomorrow . . .* seems to be to urge the Communistic overthrow of our social and financial system by means of the complete physical destruction of Sydney—a plan which is so simple that one can hardly imagine its being carried out. It is noticeable that from the general devotion to ruin the University is not excepted—indeed this institution becomes the special object of the hatred of the noble Communist taxi-driver, who, out of his great knowledge, condemns the University authorities for alleged failure in their duty of leading the community to social bliss by the use of up-to-date material and methods of education. The picture of the University is,

however, rather old-fashioned, containing as it does no free-thinkers, no study of modern and Australian literature, no younger Senators, no Faculty of Economics, no Chair of Education or Political Science, and so on.

The New Zealand Writer—That New Zealand writers are now facing the same problems as have been met (and perhaps overcome) by Australian writers in the past—the lack of a local tradition, the need to interpret the land, the “feeling of guilt” towards it, and, finally, the difficulty of authorship and publication—is evident from Mr M. H. Holcroft’s lecture to the W.E.A. of the University of Otago in 1947, recently published by the Caxton Press. “New Zealand,” writes Mr Holcroft (a well-known essayist), “is still largely undiscovered in literature . . . there can be no quick or sudden discovery . . . the questions that are spread through other literatures are still to be asked [here].” Poetry, with fiction next, has made some advance, but the local writer has the indifference of his countrymen to contend with and in addition is usually forced to earn his living by other means—a condition which aid from the new State Literary Fund may help in the future to alleviate. Mr Holcroft’s argument is refreshingly free from the anti-modernism, pontificating and religiosity that mar such a treatment of the literary position as is presented by J. C. Reid’s *Creative Writing in New Zealand*, published in 1946.

Gerard Hopkins and Marcus Clarke (see *Southerly*, Number 4, 1947, pages 218-27)—A letter of 3 September 1862 from Hopkins to Ernest Hartley Coleridge (addressed as “Dear Poet”), published for the first time in the *Times Literary Supplement* for 25 September 1948 (page 548), adds this: “I must tell you that Clarke writes very good poetry. He and I compare notes and ideas. I think I shewed you his ‘Lady of Lynn’. I suppose you do not mind; I told him about your writing and two of your ideas, the ‘abyss of green’ and ‘the iridescence of those hues,’ etc.; also since there was nothing private I read him your last letter. He would like to write to you, but does not know if you would like it.”

New Zealand State Literary Fund—According to the quarterly *Landfall*, the State Literary Fund has made a grant to Allen Curnow, the well-known poet and critic, to enable him to spend a year abroad; and has also subsidized the publication of Arnold Wall’s final collection of his poetry, *The Pioneers and Other Poems*. Emeritus Professor Wall (who formerly held the Chair of English in Canterbury University College, Christchurch) appears frequently before Australian readers as a contributor of verse to the *Bulletin*.

Honours—In this country recognition by knighthood is often accorded to prowess in business and sport, seldom in art, almost never in literature. The recent creations passed over our two most distinguished elder writers, Bernard O’Dowd and Hugh McCrae, along with the most powerful single force in Australian culture, namely Norman Lindsay. These have also done immeasurably more to raise the repute of Australia permanently in the eyes of the world than has any batsman. But such a fact, apparently, will not be generally acknowledged until, as with Brennan, it is too late to show personal appreciation.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

Free to Laugh and Dance: Stories, by G. R. Gilbert. (The Caxton Press, 1942. 3s. 6d.)

The Big Game, and Other Stories, by A. P. Gaskell. (The Caxton Press, 1947. 10s.)

A Play Toward: A Note on Play Production, by Ngaio Marsh. (The Caxton Press, 1946. 2s. 6d.)

The Quest: Words for a Mime Play, by Charles Brasch. (Published by the Compass Players, London, 1946; The Caxton Press. 2s. 6d.)

The Rakehellly Man, and Other Verses, by A. R. D. Fairburn, with Lino-Cuts by Robert Brett. (The Caxton Press, 1946. 4s. 6d.)

Signs and Wonders: Poems, by Basil Dowling. (The Caxton Press, 1944. 6s.)

The Wind and the Sand: Poems, 1934-44, by Denis Glover. (The Caxton Press, 1945. 7s. 6d.)

The Lass with the Delicate Air, by Cicely Little. (Angus & Robertson Ltd, 1948. 9s. 6d.)

Australian Youth Plays, General Editor, Leslie Rees, B.A. Junior Series: No. 1, "The Kookaburra Who Couldn't Laugh", a comedy by Peter Batten; 2, "Three Bad Boys", a Play by Mary Hewitt; 3, "The Squeaking Powder", a Fairy Play in Verse by Elsie Pearson; 4, "Over the Ranges", a One-Act Play for Young Players by Muriel Dalton; 5, "Wait Till We Grow Up", a Comedy for Children by Coralie Clarke Rees; 6, "The Jewel Casket", a Play for Eight Girls in Two Acts by Jill Meillon; 7, "The Uninvited Guest", a Comedy by Ruth Park. Senior Series: No. 1, "The Happy Revolution", by H. T. M. Middleton; 2, "Presented Without Courtesy", a Comedy by Musette Morell; 3, "Vendetta", a Corsican Frolic in One Act by Brian Garde; 4, "The Man with the Money", a Comedy by Philip Abson; 5, "The Lion-Tamer", a Comedy in One Act by H. Drake-Brockman. (Angus & Robertson Ltd, 1948. 1s. 6d. to 2s. each.)

The Concise Handbook of Australian Fishing, by "Taggerty". (National Handbook No. 19, Robertson and Mullens Ltd, Melbourne, 1947. 1s. 6d.)

The Bushman's Handbook, by H. A. Lindsay. (Angus & Robertson Ltd, 1948. 5s.)

Who's Who in Rhyme and Without Reason, by Ruth Bedford. (Australasian Publishing Co., 1948. 4s. 6d.)

Moon at Perigee, by George H. Johnston. (Angus & Robertson Ltd, 1948. 10s. 6d.)

James Clark Maxwell, A Mathematical Physicist of the Nineteenth Century, by R. L. Smith-Rose; *Lord Kelvin, Physicist, Mathematician, Engineer*, by A. P. Young. (Science in Britain. Published for the British Council by Longmans Green and Co., 1948. 1s. 6d. each.)

The Great Hall and Voices of the Past, by F. W. Robinson, M.A., Ph.D. (Sydney University Extension Board, 1947. Privately distributed.)

The Australian Artist, edited by R. Haughton James, Part Four, July 1948. (Robertson and Mullens Ltd, Melbourne. 3s. 6d.)

The Unitarian Quarterly, edited by the Rev. Colin Gibson, July 1948. (Sydney Unitarian Church, 15 Francis St, 3d.)

THE ENGLISH ASSOCIATION (SYDNEY BRANCH)

Office Bearers, 1950

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Objects of the Association

- (a) To promote the due recognition of English as an essential element in the national education and to help in maintaining the purity of the language through correctness in both its spoken and its written use.
- (b) To discuss methods of teaching English, and the correlation of school and university work.
- (c) To encourage and facilitate advanced study in English literature and language.
- (d) To unite all those occupied with English studies or interested in the Arts; to bring teachers into contact with one another and with writers and readers who do not teach; to induce those who are not themselves engaged in teaching to use their influence in the promotion of knowledge of English and of its literature as a means of intellectual progress.
- (e) To encourage and facilitate the study of Australian literature.

Advantages of Membership

1. Every member of the Association is a member of the English Association, London, and receives direct from England the Annual Report. Members may also obtain through the Secretary, by payment of 6s., the three numbers of the magazine *English* for any year, and the Annual Presidential Address. Copies of *Essays and Studies* and *The Year's Work in English Studies* are available at largely reduced prices.
2. Members may attend the meetings held in Sydney each month. At these meetings addresses are given; poems, dramas and other literary works are read, and opportunities are given for discussion and social intercourse.
3. Selected papers are printed and distributed to members in booklet form. *Southerly* is issued four times a year.
4. An Annual Dinner is held, usually in the University Union Refectory.
5. The Executive Committee is prepared to help in the formation and maintenance of branch associations in suburbs and country districts.
6. Advice and help will be given as far as possible in reading and teaching English literature, and in literary work generally.

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